

# **Chapter III:**

## **Conservation Opportunities**

### **Chapter III. Conservation Opportunities**

#### ***Farm Bill 2002 Fact Sheets and Q's and A's.***

Available at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) by clicking programs too fine additional program, technical and financial assistance.

- Conservation Provisions Overview
- Agricultural Management Assistance—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Conservation of Private Grazing Lands—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Conservation Reserve Program—Fact Sheet
- Conservation Security Program—Fact Sheet
- Conservation Technical Assistance—Fact Sheet
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program—Q&A
- Environmental Quality Incentive Program—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Forestry Incentives Program—Fact Sheet and Q&A.
- Grasslands Reserve Program—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative—Fact Sheet
- Resource Conservation and Development—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Soil Survey Programs—Fact Sheet
- Soil and Water Conservation Assistance—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention—Fact Sheet
- Wetlands Reserve Program Q&A—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program—Fact Sheet and Q&A
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program Q&A.

#### ***Conservation Program Delivery Diagram***

This diagram describes the conservations program delivery process.

Available online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/1996/DelDgm.html>

#### ***USDA: Natural Resources Programs Fact Sheet***

This publication is a summary of the financial, technical and educational assistance available for landowners. More information is available at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov). The fact sheet is available online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/news/factsheets/>

#### ***Conservation Planning—You and Your Land***

Program Aid Number 1376

Out of print

Conservation planning assistance is available through NRCS. It provides free help through this voluntary participation program. Make copies as needed from the resource manual for your use.

#### **Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC)**

The CTIC is nonprofit organization that provides data and information related to environmentally and economically beneficial natural resource systems. It publishes a newsletter six times a year, and their website is an information resource.

Website: <http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/CTIC/CTIC.html>



Ph: (765) 494-9555

Conservation Directory, 43<sup>rd</sup> Edition

**National Wildlife Foundation**

This is a list of organizations, agencies and officials concerned with natural resource use and management. An order form and index of the 2,700 organizations is included in the tool kit. If you need additional information about the catalog, contact Rue Gordon at (703) 790-4468 or [gordon@nwf.org](mailto:gordon@nwf.org).

**National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)**

NACD is the national voice of America's 3,000 local conservation districts, which help protect soil, water, forests, wildlife and other resources.

Website: [www.nacdnet.org](http://www.nacdnet.org)

**National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA)**

NASCA is a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of state executive agencies responsible for the administration of soil, water, and related natural resource programs.

Website: [www.NASCAnet.org](http://www.NASCAnet.org)

**USDA/NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute**

PowerPoint Presentations: (CD-Rom)

- Managing CRP Land for Small Game
- Conservation Tillage and Wildlife
- Fish and Wildlife Considerations

Available from Wildlife Habitat Management Institute

Website: <http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/whmi/> (In the search option, enter the title of the CD you are interested in)

100 Webster Circle, Suite 3

Madison, MS 39110

**National Wildlife Foundation (NWF)**

The NWF has programs that include wildlife community programs and educational training for teachers. They also provide information on wildlife conservation. Their website has a searchable database in addition to wildlife news and information.

Website: [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org).

Ph: (800) 822-9919.

Trout Unlimited (TU)

TU is an organization that uses an extensive volunteer network to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.

Website: <http://www.tu.org/>

1500 Wilson Blvd., #310

Arlington, VA 22209-2404

Ph: (800) 834-2419

Email: [trout@tu.org](mailto:trout@tu.org)

*Pheasants Forever*

Pheasants Forever is a non-profit conservation organization concerned with the decline of the ring neck pheasant population.

Website: <http://www.pheasantsforever.org/>

1783 Buerkle Circle

St. Paul, Minnesota 55110

Ph: 1-877-773-2070 (toll free) or (651) 773-2000

*Ducks Unlimited (DU)*

DU is a wetland conservation organization concerned about the future of the waterfowl.

Website: <http://www.ducks.org/>

One Waterfowl Way

Memphis, Tennessee, 38120

Ph: 1-800-45DUCKS or (901) 758-3825

*Working With Wetlands*

NRCS (AIB 672)

This publication presents the role and function of wetlands. It also provides information on the type of technical and financial assistance available to restore, protect and enhance wetlands.

Available by calling, 1-888-LANDCARE

*Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails and Greenway Corridors: A Resource Book.*

Prepared by Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, National Park Service

This publication addresses property values, resident expenditures, commercial uses, agency costs, tourism, corporate relocation and retention, public cost reduction, and benefit estimation. It also includes data appendices and worksheets. Available online at: [http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rtca/econ\\_index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rtca/econ_index.htm)

Hardcopies available by calling, (202) 343-3780.

**FishAmerica Foundation**

A foundation of the American Sportfishing Association.

FishAmerica is a non-profit conservation-oriented organization that focuses on both fresh and saltwater environments. The foundation's mission is to provide funding for applied fisheries research, and/or for projects that enhance fish populations and water quality. Their website contains FishAmerica news, grant applications and a list of FishAmerica projects.

Website: <http://www.asafishing.org/content/conservation/fishamerica/>

225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 420

Alexandria, VA 22314

Ph: (703) 519-9691

Fax: (703) 519-1872

Email: [info@asafishing.org](mailto:info@asafishing.org)

*Guidance for Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Setting Locally Led Natural Resource Priorities*

This guidebook provide information on forming alliances, reaching out to minority farmers, and other related data. Available in the NRCS Social Sciences Institute 2002 Product Catalogue, available online at:

[http://www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov/ssi/B\\_Stories/4\\_Misc/SSIProducts2002.pdf](http://www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov/ssi/B_Stories/4_Misc/SSIProducts2002.pdf).

Available from:

SSI

1550 East Beltline Ave., Suite 245

Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Ph: (616) 942-1503

Email: [ssinter2@po.nrcs.usda.gov](mailto:ssinter2@po.nrcs.usda.gov) .

*Growing Carbon: A New Crop That Helps Agricultural Producers and the Climate Too*

This publication is an information brochure on climate change and the greenhouse effect; affect agriculture in the U.S., and how agriculture reduces greenhouse gas. Available online at: [http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/492\\_carbon\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/492_carbon_brochure.pdf)  
Hardcopies available by calling, 1-888-LANDCARE

*The Farm as a Natural Habitat: Reconnecting Food Systems with Ecosystems*

Published by the Minnesota-based Land Stewardship Project

This book provides descriptions of how farmers are making changes in the way they produce food on the land, by finding practical ways to balance food production with the protection of nature and economic viability.

Website: <http://www.landstewardshipproject.org>

Ph: 1-800-828-1302

*Naturalize Your Farming System: A Whole-Farm Approach to Managing Pests*

SARE

This publication outlines how to use ecological principles to control pests on your farm.

Available online at: [www.sare.org/farmpest/index.htm](http://www.sare.org/farmpest/index.htm) or in PDF at

[www.sare.org/farmpest/farmpest.pdf](http://www.sare.org/farmpest/farmpest.pdf).

Hardcopies are available at: (301) 504-6422 or [aadeyemi@nal.usda.gov](mailto:aadeyemi@nal.usda.gov)

**Ecological Farming Association**

Website: <http://www.eco-farm.org/>

406 Main St., Suite 313

Watsonville, CA 95076

Ph: (831) 763-2111

Email: [info@eco-farm.org](mailto:info@eco-farm.org)

**Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association (OEFFA)**

OEFFA is a grassroots coalition of food producers and consumers that promotes a healthful, ecological, accountable and permanent agriculture in Ohio and elsewhere. They promote research on eco-management systems and techniques and the adoption of alternative technologies where appropriate.

Website: <http://www.oeffa.org>  
PO Box 82234  
Columbus OH 43202  
Ph: 614/421-2022 Fax: 614/421-2011  
Email: [oeffa@iwaynet.net](mailto:oeffa@iwaynet.net)

*Small Scale Small Field Conservation*

NRCS publication

This publication presents simple practices and concepts to help solve natural resource problems with a small investment of time and money.

Available from 1-888-LANDCARE

*Buffer Notes.*

Produced by the National Association of Conservation Districts and NRCS

This is an electronic newsletter that provides information on the use of buffers throughout the U.S.

Available online at: <http://www.nacdnet.org/buffers/02Jun/index.html>.

To subscribe, email: [buffers-request@nacdn.net](mailto:buffers-request@nacdn.net)

*Buffers—Common Sense Conservation, published for USDA by Farm Progress Companies*

This publication is a 4-page information sheet on how buffers work and how when combined with other conservation methods buffers can help eliminate serious water pollution and related environmental problems from farms. Available online at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/buffers/BufrsPub.html>

Available by calling 1-888-LANDCARE

*Buffer Strips: Common Sense Conservation*

This publication has information on buffers strips and the buffer program. The online fact sheet also provides links to Buffer Initiative contacts and buffer success stories.

Available online at: <http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/CCS/Buffers.html#Anchor-Benefits>

*Conservation Buffers Work...Economically and Environmentally*

NRCS Program Aid 1615 Revised

This publication is a fold out color brochure on the values and uses of buffers. Available online at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/buffers/pdf/BufferBr.pdf>.

Hardcopies available by calling 1-888-LANDCARE

*Conservation Buffers to Reduce Pesticide Losses*

Published through the joint effort of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the NWCC, and the US Environmental Protection Agency Office of Pesticide Programs  
March 2000

Available online at:

<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/water/quality/common/pestmgt/files/newconbuf.pdf>

### *Signatures on the Land*

Published by the Soil and Water Conservation Society with assistance from USDA  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

This publication is designed to help the public understand the importance of our nation's working land.

To order this publication:

Online, [http://www.swcs.org/t\\_pubs\\_books\\_Signatures.htm](http://www.swcs.org/t_pubs_books_Signatures.htm)

Soil and Water Conservation Society

7515 NE Ankeny Road

Ankeny, IA 50021 USA

Ph: (515) 289-2331

Fax: (515) 289-1227

### *Lesson 1: Principles of Environmental Stewardship*

By Rick Koelsch, University of Nebraska in cooperation with US EPA, CSREES, ARS, NRCS and Farm\*A\*Syst.

This publication is part of the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship Curriculum. The curriculum has lessons arranged in six modules; introduction, animal dietary strategies, manure storage and treatment, land application and nutrient management, outdoor air quality, and related issues. The full curriculum can be ordered from the Mid West Plan Service.

Website: <http://www.mwpsHQ.org/>

Ph: 800-562-3618

Email: [mwps@iastate.edu](mailto:mwps@iastate.edu)

Lesson 1 is available online at: <http://pasture.ecn.purdue.edu/~schildre/quiz/lesson01.htm>

### *Lesson 33: Selecting Land Application Sites*

By Ron Sheffield and Pat Murphy in cooperation with US EPA, CSREES, ARS, NRCS and Farm\*A\*Syst.

This publication is part of the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship Curriculum. The curriculum has lessons arranged in six modules; introduction, animal dietary strategies, manure storage and treatment, land application and nutrient management, outdoor air quality, and related issues. The full curriculum can be ordered from the Mid West Plan Service.

Website: <http://www.mwpsHQ.org/>

Ph: 800-562-3618

Email: [mwps@iastate.edu](mailto:mwps@iastate.edu)

Lesson 33 is available online at:

[http://www.lpes.org/Lessons/Lesson33/33\\_Application\\_Sites.html](http://www.lpes.org/Lessons/Lesson33/33_Application_Sites.html)

### **Sonoran Institute**

Community Stewardship Exchange

The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting community-based strategies that preserve protected lands and meet the economic aspirations of adjoining landowners and communities. The Institute tests different approaches to community based conservation and adapts these approaches based on real experiences.

Website: <http://www.sonoran.org/>  
7650 E. Broadway, Suite 203  
Tucson, AZ 85710  
Ph: (520) 290-0828  
Fax: (520) 290-0969  
Email: [sonoran@sonoran.org](mailto:sonoran@sonoran.org)

*Sustainable Agriculture*

NRCS Watershed Science Institute

This brochure discusses sustainable agriculture and the productivity, environmental quality, socioeconomic viability and sustainable characteristics of sustainable agriculture. It also presents four small scale case study summaries.

Available at: (402) 437-5178 ext 43 or [saschman@unlserve.unl.edu](mailto:saschman@unlserve.unl.edu)

*Working Landscapes in the Midwest: Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry and Communities*

Conference Proceedings

November 8 – 9 of 2001

Lake Lawn Resort; Delavan, Wisconsin

Available online at:

[http://www.forestrycenter.org/library/admin/uploadedfiles/Midwest\\_Working\\_Landscapes\\_Conference\\_2.htm](http://www.forestrycenter.org/library/admin/uploadedfiles/Midwest_Working_Landscapes_Conference_2.htm)

*Source Book of Sustainable Agriculture for Educators, Producers and Other Agricultural Professionals: A Guide to Books, Newsletters, Conference Proceedings, Bulletins, Videos and More.*

Sustainable Agricultural Network

This book provides a comprehensive list of 559 different information resources and information on how to obtain them. The book is organized by state, US territory, and country and also provides four pages of websites relating to sustainability.

Cost: \$12.00

Available from:

Website: <http://www.sare.org/htdocs/pubs/>

Ph: (802) 656-0471

**Agriculture and Natural Resource Sustainable Agriculture Website**

Purdue University

This website provides general information on sustainable agriculture.

<http://www.anr.ces.purdue.edu/anr/sustag.html>

**Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture**

Iowa State University

The Leopold Center is an organization dedicated to developing profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources and working with the Iowa State University Extension and other groups to inform the public of new research findings. The organization has a competitive Grants Program and various education programs.

Website: <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu>  
209 Curtis Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa 50011-1050  
Ph: (515) 294-3711  
Fax: (515) 294-9696  
Email: [leocenter@iastate.edu](mailto:leocenter@iastate.edu)

#### **Sustainable Measures Website**

This website develops and provides indicators that measure progress toward a sustainable economy, society and environment.  
<http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/>

#### **Landscape Conservation Network**

Fostering the Conservation of Functional Landscapes  
This network organizes workshops that focus on forest, fire, wetland, and invasive management, and arid lands grazing.  
Website: <http://tnc-ecomanagement.org/>  
Ph: (352) 392-7006  
Email: [wfulks@tnc.org](mailto:wfulks@tnc.org)

#### **Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP)**

University of Florida Extensions  
This program trains anyone interested in learning more about Florida's environment, seeking educational contact hours, or wishing to increase their knowledge for use in education programs. The FMNP provides courses in three subject areas: freshwater wetlands, coastal systems, and upland habitats.  
Website: <http://www.masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/>  
Email: [gallen@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:gallen@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu)

#### ***Making USDA Programs Work For You***

USDA, NRCS

Information sheets on how USDA farm programs can assist in developing alternative enterprises and agritourism. Four draft case studies are presented.

Available in this resource manual at:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise) or the CD described above by calling Jim Maetzold at 202-720-0132 or email at [jim.maetzold@usda.gov](mailto:jim.maetzold@usda.gov)

#### ***Living on a Few Acres***

This is a quarterly publication produced by the University of Minnesota, Washington County Extension office that addresses small acres issues and management. For more information, call Robert Olson, 651-430-6800, or email: [rolson@extension.umn.edu](mailto:rolson@extension.umn.edu).

Available online at:

[http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/main/master.asp?county\\_id=84](http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/main/master.asp?county_id=84)

#### **GreenWorks**

GreenWorks, part of the Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, is an organization that provides information on and grants for environmental conservation and awareness. Their website contains a search feature, an electronic newsletter, information on their grants and programs, the largest collection of environmental videos available online, and an educational page for kids.

Website: <http://www.greenworks.tv>

Ph: 1-800-334-3190 or (215) 545-5880

Email: [talktous@greenworks.tv](mailto:talktous@greenworks.tv)

*Greenbook 2003: Caring for the Land*

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

This publication, updated annually, provides information on how farmers are adopting energy and sustainable agriculture alternative enterprises. The publication includes stories about how people are applying alternative sustainable enterprises.

Available online at: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/ESAP/Greenbook1999/gb99cont.htm>

Hardcopies available from:

Ph: (651) 215-0367

Email: [Alison.Fish@state.mn.us](mailto:Alison.Fish@state.mn.us)

*Sustainable Agriculture: Sustainability Technical Note 1*

USDA/NRCS

Presents a few basic concepts to better understand the topic, related philosophies and practices.

Available on line at

[www.wsi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wsi.nrcs.usda.gov) or

call Stephanie Aschmann

402-437-5178

*Conservation Corridor Planning at the Landscape Level: Part 190 National Biology Handbook*

USDA/NRCS

Handbook is developed to help understand the impact of the changing landscape and assist in improving wildlife habitat.

Available by contacting the nearest NRCS Office or available online at

[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

*A Comprehensive Review of Farm Bill Contributions to Wildlife Conservation*

USDA/NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute

A comprehensive review of the scientific literature was undertaken to deter wildlife responses to programs established under the conservation title of the farm bills 1985, 1990 and 1996.

Available by contacting

[www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov)





# Farm Bill 2002

## ***Conservation Provisions Overview***

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May 2002

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) represents the single most significant commitment of resources toward conservation on private lands in the Nation's history. The legislation responds to a broad range of emerging natural resource challenges faced by farmers and ranchers, including soil erosion, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland protection. Private landowners will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost-share, land rental, incentive payments, and technical assistance. The 2002 Farm Bill places a strong emphasis on the conservation of working lands, ensuring that land remain both healthy and productive.

The conservation provisions build upon past conservation gains and respond to the call of farmers and ranchers across the country for additional cost-share resources. The 2002 Farm Bill also ensures greater access to the programs by making more farmers and ranchers eligible for participation.

### ***Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA)***

- Provides additional funding for AMA, in addition to funds provided through the Agriculture Risk Protection Act of 2000

### ***Conservation Corridor Program***

- Requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a conservation corridor demonstration program on the Delmarva Peninsula in the states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia located on the east side of the Chesapeake Bay

### ***Conservation of Private Grazing Land (CPGL)***

- Provides policy for technical assistance relating to conservation on private grazing lands, and mandates establishment of a separate funding line-item for this purpose

### ***Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007
- Raises authorization for enrollment to an overall acreage cap of 39.2 million acres
- Expands the Farmable Wetland Pilot Program to become available Nationwide with an aggregate acreage cap of 1 million acres
- Allows landowners to continue with existing ground cover where practicable and consistent with wildlife reserve benefits of CRP
- Provides for managed haying (including for biomass) and grazing

### ***Conservation Security Program (CSP)***

- Establishes CSP for fiscal years 2003 through 2007 to reward stewardship and provide an incentive for addressing additional resource concerns on agricultural working lands

### ***Desert Terminal Lakes***

- Provides \$200 million in funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation to be transferred to the Secretary of the Interior to provide water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes; prohibits the purchase or lease of water rights with the funds

### ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007 with greater funding resources
- Eliminates geographic priority areas
- Allows for expenditure of funds in the first year of the contract
- Eliminates the cap on large confined livestock operations
- Provides an overall payment limitation of \$450,000 per producer, regardless of the number of farms or contracts, over the authorized life of the 2002 Farm Bill
- Specifies contract length, from a minimum of one year beyond completion of the project to a maximum of 10 years
- Prohibits the process of bidding-down (competitive cost share reduction among program applicants)
- Allows up to 90 percent cost-share for beginning or limited resource farmers and ranchers
- Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to use a portion of EQIP funds in each of fiscal years 2003 through 2006 for innovation grants
- Provides an additional \$50 million in EQIP funding to assist producers in the Klamath Basin

### ***Farmland Protection Program (FPP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007 with greater funding resources
- Removes the existing acreage limitation, expands the definition of eligible land, and makes agricultural land that contains historic or archaeological resources eligible for enrollment
- Includes nonprofit organizations as eligible entities for program participation
- Allows the Secretary of Agriculture to provide grants (through an authorization of appropriations) for use in carrying out farm viability programs

### ***Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP)***

- Authorizes enrollment of up to 2 million acres of restored, improved, or natural grassland, rangeland, and pastureland, including prairie

### ***Grassroots Sourcewater Protection***

- Authorizes an annual appropriation for fiscal years 2002 to 2006 to use technical capabilities of each state rural water association that operates a well-head or groundwater protection program

### ***Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control***

- Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Great Lakes Commission and in cooperation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of the Army, to carry out a program in the Great Lakes basin for soil erosion and sediment control

### ***Ground and Surface Water Conservation***

- Provides a special initiative through EQIP for ground and surface water conservation
- Institutes cost-share payments, incentive payments, and loans to producers to carry out eligible water conservation activities, including irrigation improvements, conversion to less water intensive crops, and dryland farming

### ***Partnerships and Cooperation***

- Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into agreements to enhance technical and financial assistance provided to owners, operators, and producers to address natural resource issues related to agricultural production

***Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D)***

- Provides permanent reauthorization of the program and makes technical and conforming changes to the program

***Small Watershed Rehabilitation***

- Provides mandatory spending from the Commodity Credit Corporation in addition to existing authorization of appropriations

***Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)***

- Reauthorizes the program through 2007
- Increases the overall program acreage cap to 2,275,000 acres
- Caps annual acreage enrollment at 250,000 acres

***Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)***

- Provides for up to 15 percent of annual WHIP funds for increased cost-share payments to producers to protect and restore essential plant and animal habitat using agreements with a duration of at least 15 years

***For More Information***

If you need more information about the Conservation Provisions of the 2002 Farm Bill, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>





## Agricultural Management Assistance

### Fact Sheet

*Note: Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) is authorized under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Title I, Section 133 (Public Law 106-224).*

### Introduction

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) provides cost-share payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations. Producers may construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures; plant trees for windbreaks or to improve water quality; and mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices, including soil erosion control, integrated pest management, or transition to organic farming.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has leadership for the conservation provisions of AMA. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is responsible for an organic certification cost-share program and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) is responsible for mitigation of financial risk through an insurance cost-share program.

### How AMA Works

AMA is available in 15 states where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low. They are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Applicants may request AMA assistance at any time by submitting an application to the local NRCS or conservation district office. The application (form CCC-1200) is available at the local USDA Service Center or on the Web at <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

A conservation plan is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the AMA contract. NRCS will work with the landowner to develop a conservation plan. Landowners must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice. Contracts are for five to ten years.

The NRCS state conservationist, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, will determine eligible structural and/or vegetative conservation practices using a locally led process. The Federal cost share is 75 percent of the cost of an eligible practice. Participants will be paid based upon certification of completion of the approved practice.

### Eligibility

Applicants must own or control the land and agree to implement specific eligible conservation practices. Applicants must meet the Food Security Act's definition of "person." Eligible land:

- Cropland

- Hayland
- Pasture and rangeland
- Land used for subsistence purposes
- Other land (such as forestland) that produces crops or livestock where risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices.

**Funding**

AMA is budgeted at \$10 million per year. The total AMA payments (from NRCS, AMS, and RMA) shall not exceed \$50,000 per participant for any fiscal year.

**For More Information**

NRCS or your local conservation district can provide more information. Your USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## *Questions and Answers*

# *Conservation on the Land*

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United States Department of Agriculture

## ***Agricultural Management Assistance***

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**Note:** Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) is authorized under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Title I, Section 133 (Public Law 106-224).

AMA—Agricultural Management Assistance  
NRCS—Natural Resources Conservation  
Service

USDA—U.S. Department of Agriculture

AMS—Agricultural Marketing Service

RMA—Risk Management Agency

### **Q. Is AMA available nationwide?**

**A.** AMA is available in 15 states where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program is historically low. They are: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

### **Q. Where are AMA applications accepted?**

**A.** AMA applications will be accepted at local NRCS or conservation district offices. Other agricultural or natural resource agencies may assist with accepting applications. The application (form CCC-1200) is available at the local USDA Service Center or on the Web at [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov).

### **Q. What is the maximum cost-share amount allowed for each AMA contract?**

**A.** The total AMA payments (from NRCS, AMS, and RMA) shall not exceed \$50,000 per participant for any fiscal year. The Federal cost share is 75 percent of the cost of an eligible practice.

### **Q. When will sign-ups begin?**

**A.** Interested landowners may begin submitting AMA applications under a continuous sign-up. Cutoff dates for ranking the applications will be determined by the NRCS state conservationist in consultation with the State Technical Committee.

### **Q. Is a conservation plan required?**

**A.** A conservation plan is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the AMA contract. NRCS will work with the landowner to develop a conservation plan.

### **Q. Will practices be maintained after contracts expire?**

**A.** Landowners must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice, which may extend beyond the end of the contract. USDA hopes AMA participants will



ant to continue to voluntarily address issues  
uch as water management, water quality,  
nd erosion control by incorporating conser-  
vation into their farming operations.

### **What land is eligible for AMA?**

The following land is eligible for AMA:

Cropland,

Hayland,

Pasture and rangeland,

Land used for subsistence purposes, and

Other land (such as forestland) that pro-  
duces crops or livestock where risk may be  
mitigated through operation diversification  
or change in resource conservation prac-  
tices.

### **When are payments made?**

Participants will be paid upon certification  
that the approved practice has been com-  
pleted according to NRCS standards and  
specifications.

### **Who determines which applications are funded?**

Applications are selected based on a state-  
developed ranking and selection process.  
The ranking criteria will emphasize:

Construction or improvement of water man-  
agement structures or irrigation structures.

Planting trees for windbreaks or to improve  
water quality.

Mitigating risk through production diversifi-  
cation or resource conservation practices,  
including soil erosion control, integrated  
pest management, or transition to organic  
farming.

### **Q. Is other assistance available through AMA?**

**A.** NRCS has leadership for the conservation  
provisions of AMA. USDA's AMS is responsi-  
ble for an organic certification cost-share pro-  
gram and RMA is responsible for mitigation of  
financial risk through an insurance cost-share  
program.

### **Q. Is additional information available on AMA?**

**A.** NRCS or your local conservation district can  
provide more information. Your USDA  
Service Center is listed in the telephone book  
under U.S. Department of Agriculture.  
Information also is available on the Web at  
[www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/COD/  
codindex.htm](http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/COD/codindex.htm).

## Fact Sheet

March 2003

## ***Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program***

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### ***Overview***

The Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program (CPGL) is a voluntary program that helps owners and managers of private grazing land address natural resource concerns while enhancing the economic and social stability of grazing land enterprises and the rural communities that depend on them. CPGL is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program.

CPGL is available in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands of the United States, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

### ***Benefits***

Grazing lands cover an immense area and provide a diversity of ecological and economic benefits to local residents and society in general. Healthy grazing lands provide water for urban and rural uses, livestock products, flood protection, wildlife habitat, purification of air, and carbon sequestration. These lands also provide aesthetic value, open space, and vital links in the enhancement of rural social stability and economic vigor.

### ***How CPGL Works***

CPGL provides for technical assistance from NRCS to owners and managers of private grazing land to voluntarily conserve or enhance their resources to meet ecological, economic, and social demands. To receive technical assistance, a landowner or manager

may contact the local NRCS or conservation district office.

This assistance offers opportunities for:

- Maintaining and improving private grazing land and its management;
- Implementing grazing land management technologies;
- Protecting and improving the quality and quantity of water;
- Maintaining and improving wildlife and fish habitat;
- Enhancing recreational opportunities;
- Maintaining and improving the aesthetic character of private grazing land;
- Identifying opportunities and encouraging diversification; and
- Encouraging the use of sustainable grazing systems.

Requests for technical assistance through CPGL are prioritized by NRCS and the local conservation district to ensure that assistance is provided in a fair and equitable manner.

This program does not include financial assistance. However, financial assistance may be provided through other Federal, State, and local programs that address grazing land resource concerns.

### ***Eligibility***

All owners and managers of private grazing land are eligible to receive technical assistance from NRCS.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about CPGL, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.

## Questions and Answers

March 2003

## ***Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program***

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**Q. What is the Conservation of Private Grazing Land Program (CPGL)?**

**A.** CPGL is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land.

**Q. What is technical assistance?**

**A.** Technical assistance is the information, data, guidance, and other support provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff. This information helps individuals better understand the ecological principals associated with managing their land and implementing a plan that meets the needs of the resources (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) and the management objectives of the landowner or manager.

**Q. What does this assistance offer the landowner or manager?**

**A.** This program offers opportunities to maintain and improve private grazing land and its management, implement grazing land management technologies, protect and improve the quality and quantity of water, maintain and improve wildlife and fish habitat, enhance recreational opportunities, maintain and improve the aesthetic character of private grazing land, identify opportunities and encourage diversification, and encourage the use of sustainable grazing systems.

**Q. Is financial assistance or cost-share available?**

**A.** This program does not include financial or cost-share assistance. However, financial assistance may be provided by other Federal, State, and local programs that address grazing land resource concerns.

**Q. Who may request technical assistance?**

**A.** Anyone who owns or operates grazing land may request assistance.

**Q. How does one request technical assistance?**

**A.** To receive technical assistance, the individual may contact NRCS or the local conservation district.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about CPGL, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.



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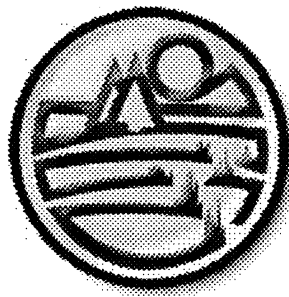
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## **CRP Signup 26 Summary Booklet**

**NOTICE!**

You are entering an Official United States Government System, which may be used only for authorized purposes. Unauthorized modification of any information stored on this system may result in criminal prosecution. The Government may monitor and audit usage of this system, and all persons are hereby notified that use of this system constitutes consent to such monitoring and auditing.



# **Conservation Reserve Program**

## **Conservation Reserve Program**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through CRP, you can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource conserving covers on eligible farmland.

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) makes annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land, and it provides cost-share assistance for up to 50 percent of the participant's costs in establishing approved conservation practices.

Participants enroll in CRP contracts for 10 to 15 years.

The program is administered by the CCC through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and program support is provided by Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cooperative State Research and Education Extension Service, state forestry agencies, and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

[\\$1.6 Billion in Conservation Reserve Program Payments Begin October 2](#)

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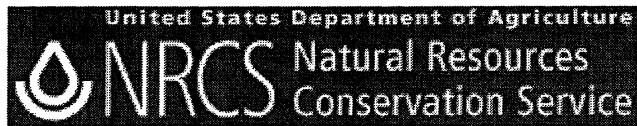
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## Conservation Security Program

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (The 2002 Act) (Pub. L. 107-171) amended the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the Conservation Security Program (CSP). CSP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). CSP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands. Working lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pasture, and range land, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agriculture operation.

In keeping with principles outlined in the USDA publication, "Food and Agriculture Policy--Taking Stock for the New Century", the Secretary's vision for CSP's unique role within USDA conservation programs is to:

- Identify and meaningfully reward those farmers and ranchers meeting the very highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations;
- Create powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance on their operations; and
- Provide public benefits for generations to come.






In short, CSP should reward the best and motivate the rest. The intent of CSP is to support ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing assistance to producers to maintain and enhance natural resources. The program is available in all 50 States, the Caribbean Area and the Pacific Basin area. The program provides equitable access to benefits to all producers, regardless of size of operation, crops produced, or geographic location.

"The intent of CSP is to support ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing assistance to producers to maintain and enhance natural resources," Knight said.

CSP has a unique role among USDA conservation programs. It identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who meet the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations, creates powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance on their operations, and provides public benefits for generations to come.

## Program Information

These documents require [Adobe Acrobat](#) reader.

-  [Fact Sheet](#)
-  [Questions and Answers](#)
-  [Key Points](#)
-  [Program Description](#)
-  [Conservation Security Program, Section 2001 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 \(Pub. L. 107-171\)](#)

- [USDA News Release](#), Feb. 10, 2003



- [Federal Register Notice, Advance Rulemaking, February 18, 2003](#)
- [Federal Register Notice, Extension of Comment Period, March 21, 2003](#)
- [CSP Quotes](#)
- CSP Training Information
- NRCS Policy
- Environmental Assessment and FONSI

**NRCS Program Contact**

[Craig Derickson](#), 202-720-3524



## Conservation Technical Assistance

The Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program provides voluntary conservation technical assistance to land-users, communities, units of state and local government, and other Federal agencies in planning and implementing conservation systems. This assistance is for planning and implementing conservation practices that address natural resource issues. It helps people voluntarily conserve, improve and sustain natural resources.

Objectives of the program are to:

- Assist individual landusers, communities, conservation districts, and other units of State and local government and Federal agencies to meet their goals for resource stewardship and assist individuals to comply with State and local requirements. NRCS assistance to individuals is provided through conservation districts in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by the Secretary of Agriculture, the governor of the state, and the conservation district. Assistance is provided to land users voluntarily applying conservation and to those who must comply with local or State laws and regulations.
- Assist agricultural producers to comply with the highly erodible land (HEL) and wetland (Swampbuster) provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. 3801 et. seq.) and the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 and wetlands requirements of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. NRCS makes HEL and wetland determinations and helps land users develop and implement conservation plans to comply with the law.
- Provide technical assistance to participants in USDA cost-share and conservation incentive programs. (Assistance is funded on a reimbursable basis from the CCC.)
- Collect, analyze, interpret, display, and disseminate information about the condition and trends of the Nation's soil and other natural resources so that people can make good decisions about resource use and about public policies for resource conservation.
- Develop effective science-based technologies for natural resource assessment, management, and conservation.

Technical assistance is for planning and implementing natural resource solutions to reduce erosion, improve soil health, improve water quantity and quality, improve and conserve wetlands, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, improve air quality, improve pasture and range health, reduce upstream flooding, improve woodlands, and address other natural resource issues.

## Farmbill Assistance

The conservation technical assistance base program, wholly or in part, provides technical assistance for implementation of the Highly Erodible land (HEL) and Wetland Provisions, and many other programs authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill. NRCS technical field staff makes HEL and wetland determinations and assist land-users to develop and implement conservation plans needed to ensure compliance with the law.



## Natural Resources Inventory

The CTA program supports the National Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI is a statistically based survey to assess conditions and trends of soil, water, and related resources on non-Federal lands in the United States. USDA, other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and other organizations to support agricultural and conservation policy development and program evaluation use this information.

## Summary

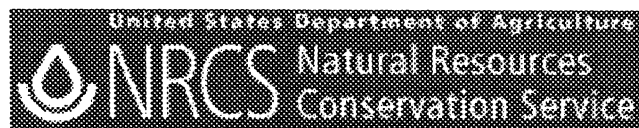
The working relationships that landowners and communities have with their local NRCS staff are unique. One-on-one help through flexible, voluntary programs occurs every day in local NRCS offices across the country. It is the way NRCS does business, and it works. To obtain conservation technical assistance, contact your local USDA-NRCS office.

## Additional Information

- [Importance of Conservation Technical Assistance](#)
  - [Farm Bill Conservation Provisions](#)
- 

## Program Contacts

Walley Turner, National Program Manager, 202-720-1875



## Questions and Answers

### What is the Emergency Watershed Protection Program?

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) was set up by Congress to respond to emergencies created by natural disasters. It is designed to relieve imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. The purpose of EWP is to help groups of people with a common problem. It is generally not an individual assistance program. All projects undertaken must be sponsored by a political subdivision of the State, such as a city, county, general improvement district, or conservation district. The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service is responsible for administering the program.



Immediate work to restore river channels protects private property from further flood damage

### Is financial assistance available?

NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the construction cost of emergency measures. The remaining 25 percent must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.

### What are the criteria for assistance?

All EWP work must reduce threats to life and property. Furthermore, it must be economically and environmentally defensible and sound from an engineering standpoint. EWP work must yield benefits to more than one person. All work must represent the least expensive alternative.

### Who is eligible?

Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance but must be represented by a project sponsor. The project sponsor must be a public agency of state, county, or city government, or a special district.

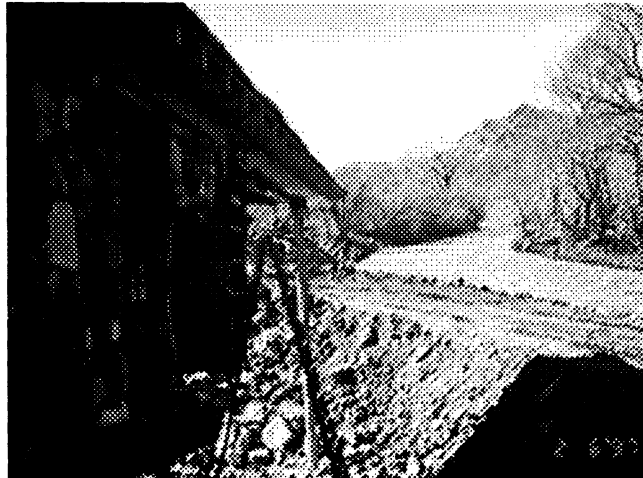
### What does the sponsor have to do?

Sponsors are responsible for providing landrights to do repair work and securing the

necessary permits. Sponsors are also responsible for furnishing the local cost share and for accomplishing the installation of work. The work can be done either through federal or local contracts.

### What kind of work can be done?

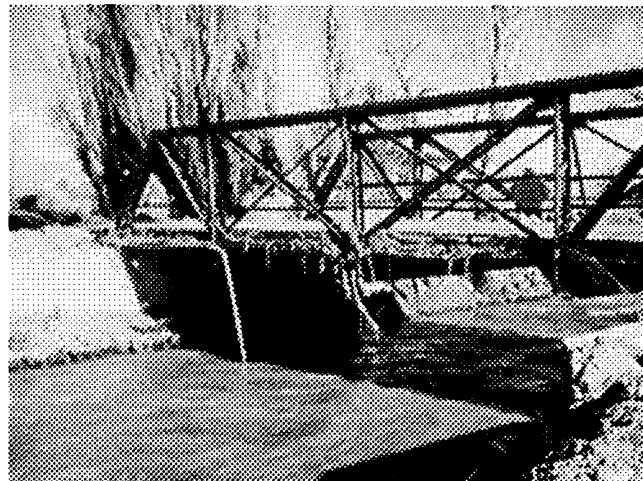
EWP work is not limited to any one set of prescribed measures. A case by case investigation of the needed work is made by NRCS. EWP work can include: removing debris from stream channels, road culverts, and bridges; reshaping and protecting eroded banks; correcting damaged drainage facilities; repairing levees and structures; reseeding damaged areas; and purchasing floodplain easements.



A constricted river channel caused the raging flood water to find a new path, carving a gorge under this house and carrying away another house just downstream

### What can't EWP do?

EWP funds cannot be used to solve problems that existed before the disaster or to improve the level of protection above that which existed prior to the disaster. EWP cannot fund operation and maintenance work, or repair private or public transportation facilities or utilities. EWP work cannot adversely affect downstream water rights, and EWP funds cannot be used to install measures not essential to the reduction of hazards. In addition, EWP funds cannot be used to perform work on measures installed by another federal agency.



High water deposits debris and sediment on bridges and can damage their foundations

### How do I get assistance?

If you feel your area has suffered severe damage and may qualify under the EWP program, you are encouraged to contact your local general improvement district or county supervisor to request assistance. City and county governments, general improvement districts, and conservation districts are the most common sponsors of EWP projects. The sponsor's application should be in the form of a letter signed by an official of the sponsoring organization. The letter should include information on the nature, location, and scope of the problem for which assistance is requested. Information is available from NRCS offices to explain the eligibility requirements for the EWP program. Send applications for assistance to your local USDA Service Center or NRCS Field Office or your NRCS State Office.

**All applications must be submitted *within 10 days* of the disaster for exigency situations and *within 60 days* of the disaster for nonexigency situations.**



## Fact Sheet

June 2003

# Farm Bill 2002

## *Environmental Quality Incentives Program*

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### *Overview*

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides assistance to agricultural producers in a manner that will promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers and ranchers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental requirements.

EQIP is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). Funding for EQIP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

### *Benefits*

Since EQIP began in 1997, USDA has entered into 117,625 contracts, enrolled more than 51.5 million acres into the program, and obligated nearly \$1.08 billion to help producers advance stewardship on working agricultural land. These efforts have concentrated on improving water quality, conserving both ground and surface water, reducing soil erosion from cropland and forestland, and improving rangeland. EQIP also was used to improve riparian and aquatic areas, improve air quality, and address wildlife issues. The increased funding for EQIP in the 2002 Farm Bill greatly expands program availability for optimizing environmental benefits.

### *How EQIP Works*

The objective of EQIP, optimize environmental benefits, is achieved through a process that begins with the definition of National priorities. The National priorities are:

- Reduction of nonpoint source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds, consistent with TMDLs where available, as well as reduction of groundwater contamination and conservation of ground and surface water resources;
- Reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land; and
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.

These priorities are used by the Chief of NRCS to allocate available EQIP funds to State conservationists. The State conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, then identifies the priority natural resource concerns in the State that will be used to help guide which applicants are awarded EQIP assistance. After identifying the priority natural resource concerns, the State conservationist, with

advice from the State Technical Committee, decides how funds will be allocated, what practices will be offered, what the cost-share rates will be, the ranking process used to prioritize contracts, and which of these authorities will be delegated to local level. The local designated conservationist, with the advice of local work groups, adapts the State program to the local conditions. As a result, EQIP can be different between states and even between counties.

The selection of eligible conservation practices and the development of a ranking process to evaluate applications are the final steps in the optimization process. Applications will be ranked based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

More information regarding state and local EQIP implementation can be found at [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/EQIP\\_signup/2003%20EQIP%20Signup/2003\\_EQIP.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/EQIP_signup/2003%20EQIP%20Signup/2003_EQIP.html)

### ***Eligibility***

Persons engaged in livestock or agricultural production are eligible for the program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, private non-industrial forest land, and other farm or ranch lands. Persons interested in entering into a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for EQIP assistance may file an application at any time. To be eligible to participate, applicants must:

- Be an agricultural producer;
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill;
- Provide the Social Security number of all individuals who will benefit from the assistance; and

- Develop an EQIP plan of operations, including:
  - The participant's specific conservation and environmental objectives to be achieved;
  - One or more conservation practices in the conservation management system to be implemented to achieve the conservation and environmental objectives; and
  - The schedule for implementing the conservation practices.

If an EQIP plan of operations includes an animal waste storage or treatment facility, the participant must provide for the development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan.

NRCS works with the participant to develop the EQIP plan of operations. This plan becomes the basis of the cost-share agreement between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides cost-share payments to landowners under these agreements that can be up to 10 years in duration.

The 2002 Farm Bill limits the total amount of cost-share and incentive payments paid to an individual or entity to an aggregate of \$450,000, directly or indirectly, for all contracts entered into during fiscal years 2002 through 2007. American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders may use alternative unique identification numbers for each individual eligible for payment.

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for EQIP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or

forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

### ***Practice Payments***

Cost-sharing may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells, and other practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area. The EQIP cost-share rates for limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be up to 90 percent. USDA has established a self-determination tool for applicants to determine eligibility as a limited resource producer. The tool can be found at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/smlfarmer/tool.asp>

Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to perform land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management. These payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices that they otherwise might not implement.

### ***How to Apply for EQIP***

Applications may be obtained and filed at any time with your local USDA Service Center or conservation district office. Applications also may be obtained through USDA's e-gov Web site at: <http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Enter Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Agency field, Environmental Quality Incentives Program in the Program Name field, and CCC-1200 in the Form Number field. Applications also may be accepted by cooperating conservation partners approved or designated by NRCS.

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. The local decision makers periodically will announce a ranking date when applications received will be ranked.

### ***For More Information***

If you need more information about EQIP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.





## Questions and Answers

## *Environmental Quality Incentives Program*

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June 2003

### **Q. What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)?**

- A.** The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill), is a voluntary USDA conservation program for farmers and ranchers to treat identified soil, air, water, and related natural resource concerns on eligible land. It provides technical and financial assistance to eligible producers.

### **Q. Has the EQIP rule been finalized?**

- A.** OMB approved the final EQIP rule on May 14, 2003. A copy of the rule can be found on the NRCS Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip>

### **Q. What are the primary changes to EQIP in the 2002 Farm Bill that have been included in the final EQIP rule?**

- A.** The primary changes are:

- Producers can receive payments in the same year the contract is approved.
- Applications will be evaluated for funding based on a locally developed procedure to optimize environmental benefits.
- The "bid-down" provision to improve chances for being awarded a contract has been eliminated.
- The minimum length of an EQIP contract has been reduced to one year after the implementation of all practices.
- Although the maximum cost-share rate remains at 75 percent, limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-share.
- Livestock operations are eligible to receive cost-share payments for waste storage facilities. Contracts which contain animal waste storage or treatment facilities require that the participant develop and implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan.
- Conservation Priority Areas are no longer used to implement EQIP
- The aggregate total cost-share and incentive payments that each individual or entity can receive, directly or indirectly, is \$450,000 over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts.
- Starting in fiscal year 2003, no individual or entity may receive EQIP payments in any crop year in which the individual or entity's average adjusted gross income for the preceding three years exceeds \$2.5 million. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

**Q. What other provisions are included in the final EQIP rule?**

**A. Other changes are:**

- NRCS has established the following National priorities to assist in the selection of producers to receive EQIP assistance:
  1. Reduction of nonpoint source pollution, such as nutrients, sediment, pesticides, or excess salinity in impaired watersheds consistent with Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) where available, as well as reduction of groundwater contamination and conservation of ground and surface water resources;
  2. Reduction of emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that contribute to air quality impairment violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards;
  3. Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels on agricultural land; and
  4. Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.
- The approving authority for EQIP contracts will be the State conservationist or designee, except the approving authority for any EQIP contract greater than \$100,000 is the NRCS regional conservationist.
- Practice cost lists that include any structural practice with a greater than 50 percent cost-share rate are to be approved by the State conservationist with concurrence of the regional conservationist.
- To be eligible to participate, all individuals applying, either alone or as part of a joint operation, must provide a social security number and entities must provide the social security numbers of all beneficiaries. Where applicable; American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders may use another identification number that is unique for each individual eligible for payment. This information is required to track aggregated payments.
- Applications are not given special consideration, regardless of the size of the operation.
- EQIP contracts will be limited to a maximum of \$450,000.
- Only land that has been irrigated for two of the last five years prior to application for assistance will be eligible for cost-share or incentive payments for irrigation related structural and land management practices.
- The term “cost-effectiveness” has been clarified and can be interpreted two ways: 1) Greater environmental benefits for the same cost, or 2) providing EQIP assistance for the least-cost alternative. The first will be accomplished by the ranking processes developed by State and local decision makers. For the second, NRCS will provide assistance to implement the least-cost alternative that would achieve the desired resource benefits. Participants may choose to adopt more costly alternatives, but they would have to bear the additional costs.

**Q. Where is EQIP available?**

- A.** The program is available in every State, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Pacific Basin territories of Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

**Q. Does EQIP target financial resources to Conservation Priority Areas?**

- A. No. EQIP is used to address natural resource concerns in areas associated with agricultural production. The legislative requirement for Conservation Priority Areas has been removed.

**Q. Are large confined livestock operations eligible for financial assistance?**

- A. Yes. Contracts which contain a waste management facility require development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan.

**Q. What is the State Technical Committee?**

- A. The State Technical Committee is an entity authorized under law to provide advice to the NRCS State conservationist on implementation of conservation programs authorized and reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. The membership of the State Technical Committee includes representatives of Federal, State, and local governmental agencies; Tribes; non-government organizations; conservation districts; business; agricultural producers; and individuals interested in natural resource conservation with expertise in soil, water, wetland, and wildlife management.

**Q. Who serves on the local work groups?**

- A. Local work groups, convened by the conservation district, include representatives from the conservation district board; NRCS; Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees and staff; Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; other Federal, State, and local agencies; and Tribes interested in natural resource conservation with expertise in soil, water,

wetland, and wildlife management. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) limits membership to local work groups to representatives of State and local governments and subdivisions thereof.

**Q. Who is eligible for EQIP?**

- A. Producers who are engaged in crop or livestock production on eligible land are eligible for the program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, private non-industrial forestland, and other farm or ranch lands, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

**Q. What level of cost-sharing is available?**

- A. Through EQIP, producers may receive cost-share payments for up to 75 percent of the costs of structural conservation practices and may receive incentive payments for land management conservation practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area. Limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for up to 90 percent cost-sharing. Actual cost-share rates and incentive payments will be determined at the State and local level. Practice cost lists that include any structural practice with a greater than 50 percent cost share-rate are to be approved by the State conservationist with concurrence of the regional conservationist.

**Q. What are incentive payments?**

- A. Incentive payments provide financial assistance to encourage producers to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat enhancement, and to develop comprehensive nutrient management plans.

**Q. Who are limited resource producers?**

**A. A limited resource producer/rancher is:**

- (1) A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than \$100,000 in each of the previous two years (to be increased starting in FY-2004 to adjust for inflation using the Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by the National Agriculture Statistics Service; and
- (2) Has a total household income at or below the National poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years (to be determined annually using Commerce Department data).

A limited resource producer/rancher self determination tool is available on the Web at: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/tool\\_noname.asp](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/tool_noname.asp)

**Q. Who are beginning farmers and ranchers?**

- A.** The basic criterion for a beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity who has operated a farm or a ranch for not more than ten years. Contact your local USDA Service Center for additional information.

**Q. How are applications selected?**

- A.** Applications are ranked according to criteria developed at the State or local level. Ranking criteria for your area can be found online at: [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/EQIP\\_signup/2003%20EQIP%20Signup/2003\\_EQIP.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/EQIP_signup/2003%20EQIP%20Signup/2003_EQIP.html)

**Q. What conservation practices are eligible for financial assistance?**

- A.** The State conservationist, with advice of the State Technical Committee, identifies which conservation practices are eligible.

Local work groups assist in identifying practices to treat the locally identified resource concerns. All practices must be implemented in conformance to NRCS standards and specifications.

**Q. Does the locally led process allow the State conservationist to give special consideration to issues that are not National priorities?**

- A:** Yes, where the resource concerns warrant, the State conservationist may give special consideration to practices related to residue, pest, invasive species, and air quality management.

**Q. What kind of plan does a producer need for EQIP?**

- A.** All EQIP activities must be carried out according to an EQIP plan of operations for the practice(s) to be implemented. These plans are site specific for each farm or ranch and may be developed by producers or with help from NRCS or other certified technical service providers. EQIP plans of operation are developed in conjunction with the producer and address the producer's objectives and the identified natural resource concerns. All plans are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions and are approved by the conservation district.

**Q. What is the length of an EQIP contract?**

- A.** The 2002 Farm Bill establishes that EQIP contracts will be for a maximum of 10 years and a minimum that ends one year after the practices have been implemented.

**Q. Are lands under a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract eligible for EQIP funding?**

- A.** They are not eligible during the term of the CRP contract.

**Q. How do producers apply for the program?**

- A. Producers may obtain EQIP applications at any USDA Service Center. Applications are accepted continuously throughout the year. Applications for EQIP funding will be evaluated periodically.

**Q. What are my chances of getting an EQIP contract?**

- A. The EQIP program has been oversubscribed since it was first authorized in 1997. Even with the increased funding, application numbers from the States indicate that about one out of every six applications can be awarded EQIP assistance.

**Q. How is EQIP funded?**

- A. Funding comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation. EQIP's authorized budget of \$6.1 billion over 6 years starts with \$400 million in fiscal year 2002 and increases to \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 2006.

**Q. Does EQIP contain any other new provisions?**

- A. Yes. The 2002 Farm Bill added two aspects to EQIP; Conservation Innovation Grants and Ground and Surface Water Conservation.

**Q. What are Conservation Innovation Grants?**

- A. Starting in 2003, Conservation Innovation Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to leverage federal investment, stimulate innovative approaches, and accelerate technology transfer. These grants cannot exceed 50 percent of the cost of the project.

**Q. What is the Ground and Surface Water Conservation provision?**

- A. Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC) provides cost-share and incentive payments to producers where the assistance will result in a net savings in ground or surface water resources in the agricultural operation of the producer. GSWC provides \$45 million for fiscal year 2003. An additional \$50 million has been approved for the Klamath Basin in California and Oregon for the life of the 2002 Farm Bill.

**Q. How is "agricultural operation" defined?**

- A. An agricultural operation is defined as a parcel or parcels of land (contiguous or non-contiguous) with a cohesive management unit for agricultural purposes, located in the county or counties in which the principle dwelling is situated or, if no dwelling is present, in the county in which the main portion of the land is located.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about WHIP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

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## Fact Sheet

April 2003

## ***Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program***

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### ***Overview***

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements. FRPP is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program.

### ***Benefits/Accomplishments***

Through 2002, more than 170,000 acres have been protected in 35 states.

### ***How FRPP Works***

USDA works through State, Tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations to conduct the FRPP. These entities acquire conservation easements from landowners. Participating landowners agree not to convert their land to non-agricultural uses and to develop and implement a conservation plan for any highly erodible land. All highly erodible lands enrolled must have a conservation plan developed based on the standards in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and approved by the local conservation district. Landowners retain all rights to use the property for agriculture.

To participate, a landowner submits an application to an entity a State, Tribal, or local government or a non-governmental organization that has an existing farm or ranch land protection program. The NRCS

State conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, awards funds to qualified entities to purchase perpetual conservation easements.

### ***Eligibility***

To qualify for FRPP, the land offered must be part or all of a farm or ranch and must:

- Contain prime, unique, or other productive soil or historical or archaeological resources;
- Be included in a pending offer from a State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organization's farmland protection program;
- Be privately owned;
- Be covered by a conservation plan for any highly erodible land;
- Be large enough to sustain agricultural production;
- Be accessible to markets for what the land produces;
- Be surrounded by parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production; and
- Be owned by an individual or entity that does not exceed the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation.

The AGI provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for FRPP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average AGI exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the

AGI is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

If the land cannot be converted to non-agricultural uses because of existing deed restrictions or other legal constraints, it is ineligible for FRPP.

### ***Funding***

FRPP is funded through the Commodity Credit Corporation. The FRPP share of the easement cost must not exceed 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. As part of its share of the cost of purchasing a conservation easement, a State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organization may include a charitable donation by the landowner of up to 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. A cooperating entity must provide, in cash, 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement or 50 percent of the purchase price.

### ***For More Information***

If you need more information about FRPP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
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## Questions and Answers

April 2003

## *Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program*

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**Q. What is the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)?**

- A.** FRPP is a voluntary Federal program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to State, Tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is designated as the lead agency in implementing this program.

**Q. What are the major changes to FRPP in the 2002 Farm Bill?**

- A.** The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) expands the program beyond state and local governments to include non-governmental organizations as eligible entities. It also makes farm and ranch land containing historical and archaeological sites eligible. The 2002 Farm Bill also allows a State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organization to supplement its share of the easement cost through a landowner's donation.

**Q. What is a conservation easement?**

- A.** A conservation easement is an interest in land, as defined and delineated in a deed, whereby the landowner conveys specific rights, title, and interests in a property to a State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organization. The landowner retains those rights, title, and interests in

the property which are specifically reserved to the landowner in the easement deed, such as the right to farm.

**Q. What is a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program?**

- A.** A PACE program, sometimes referred to as a purchase of development rights program, is a voluntary farmland protection program that compensates landowners for voluntarily limiting future development of their land for non-agricultural uses. PACE programs, which are generally operated by Federal, State, and local governments or non-governmental organizations, enable landowners to sell development rights on their land to a government agency or non-governmental organization, such as a land trust, while retaining full ownership.

**Q. How does a landowner participate in FRPP?**

- A.** A landowner submits an application to an entity a State, Tribal, or local government or a non-governmental organization that has an existing farm or ranch land protection program. In exchange for payment, participating landowners agree not to convert their land to non-agricultural uses and to develop and implement a conservation plan for any highly erodible land. The NRCS State conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee, awards funds to qualified entities to conduct their farm and ranch land protection programs. These

entities acquire perpetual conservation easements from landowners.

**Q. How is the value of a conservation easement determined?**

- A. The value of a conservation easement usually is determined through a professional appraisal. A qualified appraiser assesses the difference between the fair market value of the property, often using comparable sales, and its restricted value under the easement.

**Q. What restrictions are found in a typical easement?**

- A. The easements generally restrict non-farm development and subdivisions. Some farm-related housing may be allowed. Generally, there are few restrictions on improvements and construction related to the farming operation. The easements become part of the land deed and are recorded in the local land records.

**Q. Are all agricultural conservation easements the same?**

- A. The basic purpose and structure of all agricultural conservation easements are the same. However, each easement is tailored to the specific farm being protected. Exact language in the easement may reflect future expansion plans of the landowners, including the needs of their heirs.

**Q. How do the easements affect other rights of ownership?**

- A. The landowner controls the land and use of the land according to the agricultural conservation easement. The land still is owned by the landowner and can be transferred, deeded, or sold, just as any other property. The easement does not require any provisions for public access, unless such access was negotiated as part of the easement purchase transaction.

**Q. Does a conservation easement affect a farmer's ability to borrow money?**

- A. A farm loan usually is based on the ability of the farm operation to carry the loan. Therefore, a conservation easement, which only affects non-farm development activities, not the farm operation, should not have a bearing on the farmer's ability to borrow operating funds. If a lending institution holds a lien on a property, it must review the sale of the conservation easement just as it would need to approve any transaction on the property.

**Q. What are the local property tax implications of protecting farmland with conservation easements?**

- A. Because the landowner still owns the property, he or she still is responsible for paying any associated property taxes. Since many states have programs that tax farmland based on its use or farm value, the net effect of the easement on local property tax revenues is little to none.

**Q. How are the proceeds from the sale of a conservation easement treated for tax purposes?**

- A. The easement sale proceeds are treated as any other capital gain for Federal, State, and local income tax purposes. Some State or local programs have provisions that allow for installment purchases or have used securable tax-exempt bonds as a method of payment.

**Q. What is the role of the Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and non-governmental organizations?**

- A. Cooperating governmental or non-governmental organizations process the easement acquisition, hold, manage, and enforce easements. A Federal contingent right interest in the property must be incorporated in each easement deed to

protect the Federal investment if the cooperating entity terminates, defaults, or divests itself from the easement.

**Q. How much is a State, Tribal, or local government or non-governmental organization required to contribute?**

- A. The NRCS share of the conservation easement cannot exceed 50 percent of the appraised fair market value. As part of its share of the cost of purchasing a conservation easement, a cooperating entity may include a charitable donation by the landowner not to exceed 25 percent of the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement. The cooperating entity shall provide, in cash, 25 percent of the appraised fair market value or 50 percent of the purchase price.

**Q. Could the Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impact my participation in FRPP?**

- A. Yes, if you are an individual or entity that has an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the application year, you are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about FRPP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



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## Forestry Incentives Program Fact Sheet

### Introduction

The 1996 Farm Bill extends the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP), which was originally authorized in 1978 to share up to 65 percent of the costs of tree planting, timber stand improvements, and related practices on nonindustrial private forest lands. FIP's forest maintenance and reforestation provide numerous natural resource benefits, including reduced wind and soil erosion and enhanced water quality and wildlife habitat as well as helping to assure a reliable future supply of timber. Improving timber stands, which help to sequester greenhouse gases, also contributes to the President's Climate Change initiative. FIP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Forest Service.

### Program Availability

FIP is a nationwide program available in counties designated on the basis of a Forest Service survey of total eligible private timber acreage that is potentially suitable for production of timber products. Federal cost-share money is available with a limit of \$10,000 per person per year with the stipulation that no more than 65 percent of the cost may be paid. To find out if your county participates in FIP, check with your local USDA office, State forester, conservation district, or Cooperative Extension office.

### FIP-Preparing To Meet the Demand

FIP is intended to assure the Nation's ability to meet future demand for sawtimber, pulpwood, and quality hardwoods by planting more trees and placing more forest land under good forest management. FIP's cost sharing for these measures helps eligible private landowners, whose small parcels represent the majority of the Nation's forest lands.

To be eligible for cost-share assistance under FIP, a landowner must:

- Own no more than 1,000 acres of eligible forest land. In the public interest, the Secretary of Agriculture can grant an exception for larger acreages;
- Be a private landowner of a nonindustrial forest. Individuals, groups, associations, or corporations whose stocks are not publicly traded may be eligible for FIP provided they are not primarily engaged in the business of manufacturing forest products or providing public utility services;
- Have land that is suitable for conversion from nonforest land into forest land (afforestation); for reforestation; or for improved forest management; and
- Have land that is capable of producing marketable timber crops and meets minimum productivity standards established for FIP.

Available practices under FIP are:

- Tree planting;
- Improving a stand of forest trees; and
- Site preparation for natural regeneration.

The State forester provides technical advice in developing a forest management plan and helps find approved vendors, if needed, for completing the FIP work. In addition, the State forestry agency must certify that the project has been completed satisfactorily before cost-share payments can be made.

**For More Information**

Additional information is available from NRCS, Forest Service, FSA, the Cooperative Extension Service, State forestry agencies, or your local conservation district. Your local USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture.



## **Forestry Incentives Program Questions and Answers**

### **Forestry Incentives Program Fact Sheet**

#### **Introduction**

On May 13, 2002, the 2002 Farm Bill repealed the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP), which was originally authorized in 1978 to share up to 65 percent of the costs of tree planting, timber stand improvements, and related practices on non-industrial private forest lands. Funds remaining on May 13, 2002 will be exhausted through FIP closeout, using pre-repeal program provisions. FIP's forest maintenance and reforestation provide numerous natural resource benefits, including reduced wind and soil erosion and enhanced water quality and wildlife habitat as well as helping to assure a reliable future supply of timber. Improving timber stands, which help to sequester greenhouse gases, also contributes to the President's Climate Change initiative. FIP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Forest Service.

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- Be a private landowner of a non-industrial forest. Individuals, groups, associations, or corporations whose stocks are not publicly traded may be eligible for FIP provided they are not primarily engaged in the business of manufacturing forest products or providing public utility services;
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- Have land that is capable of producing marketable timber crops and meets minimum productivity standards established for FIP.

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The State forester provides technical advice in developing a forest management plan and helps find approved vendors, if needed, for completing the FIP work. In addition, the State forestry agency must certify that the project has been completed satisfactorily before cost-share payments can be made.

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Additional information is available from NRCS, Forest Service, FSA, the Cooperative Extension Service, State forestry agencies, or your local conservation district. Your local USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture.



# Farm Bill 2002

## Fact Sheet

August 2003

## Grassland Reserve Program

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### *Overview*

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland, and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion.

GRP is authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) administer the program, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service. Funding for the GRP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).

### *Benefits*

Restoring and protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality.

### *How GRP Works*

Applications may be filed for an easement or rental agreement with NRCS or FSA at any time. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing practices; produce hay, mow, or harvest for seed production (subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season of bird species that are in significant decline or those that are protected under Federal or State law); conduct fire rehabilitation; and construct firebreaks and fences.

The program offers several enrollment options:

*Permanent Easement.* This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments for this option equal the fair market value, less the grazing value of the land encumbered by the easement. These values will be determined using an appraisal.

*Thirty-year Easement.* USDA will provide an easement payment equal to 30 percent of the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land for the period during which the land is encumbered by the easement.

For both easement options, USDA will provide ALL administrative costs associated with recording the easement, including appraisal fees, survey costs, title insurance, and recording fees. Easement payments may be provided, at the participant's request, in lump sum or annual payments (equal or unequal amounts) for up to 10 years.

*Rental Agreement.* Participants may choose a 10-year, 15-year, 20-year, or 30-year contract. USDA will provide annual payments in an amount that is not more than 75 percent of the grazing value of the land covered by the agreement for the life of the agreement. Payments will be disbursed on the agreement anniversary date each year.

*Restoration agreement.* If restoration is determined necessary by NRCS, a restoration agreement will be incorporated within the rental agreement or easement. CCC will provide up to 90 percent of the restoration costs on lands that have never been cultivated,



and up to 75 percent of the cost on restored grasslands. Participants will be paid upon certification of the completion of the approved practice(s) by NRCS or an approved third party. Participants may contribute to the application of a cost-share practice through in-kind contributions.

### ***Eligibility***

Landowners who can provide clear title are eligible to participate for either easement option. Landowners and others who have general control of the acreage may submit an application for a rental agreement.

There is no national maximum limitation on the amount of land that may be offered for the program. However, there is a minimum requirement established in law. Offers for enrollment must contain at least 40 contiguous acres, unless special circumstances exist to accept a lesser amount. These special circumstances are determined by the NRCS State Conservationist.

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for GRP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

Eligible land includes grassland or land that contains forbs or shrubs (including improved rangeland and pastureland); and grassland or land that is located in an area that historically has been dominated by grassland, forbs, and shrubs and has potential to provide habitat for animal or plant populations of significant ecological value if the land is retained in its current use or restored to a natural condition. Incidental lands may be included to allow for the efficient administration of an agreement or easement.

### ***For More Information***

If you need more information about GRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/> and <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/GRP/default1.htm>



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# Farm Bill 2002

## Questions and Answers

August 2003

## Grassland Reserve Program

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### **Q. What is the Grassland Reserve Program?**

- A.** The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland and pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. The program emphasizes support for grazing operations, plant and animal biodiversity, and grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under the greatest threat of conversion. The program is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

### **Q. What are the goals of the program?**

- A.** The program goals are to help conserve and protect two million acres of restored or improved grassland, rangeland, and pastureland by purchasing easements, entering into long-term rental agreements, and providing technical and financial assistance to participants for restoring the functions and values of grasslands and shrub lands.

### **Q. What land is eligible?**

- A.** GRP is available on private lands including: 1) Grassland or land that contains forbs or shrubs (including improved rangeland and pastureland); and 2) grassland or land that is located in an area that historically has been dominated by grassland, forbs, and shrubs and has potential to provide habitat for animal or

plant populations of significant ecological value if the land is retained in its current use or restored to a natural condition.

Incidental lands may be included to allow for the efficient administration of a rental agreement or easement.

### **Q. Is there a limit on the number of acres a landowner may enroll in the program?**

- A.** There is no national maximum limitation on the amount of land that may be offered for the program. However, there is a minimum requirement established in law. Offers for enrollment must contain at least 40 contiguous acres, unless special circumstances exist to accept a lesser amount. These special circumstances are determined by the NRCS State Conservationist.

### **Q. Who may participate in the program?**

- A.** Only landowners may submit applications for easements. Both landowners and operators may participate on rental and restoration agreements. Operators may participate on rental agreements only when they provide evidence that they will have control of the property for the length of the agreement and have landowner concurrence.

### **Q. Could the Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impact my participation in GRP?**

- A.** Yes, if you are an individual or entity that has an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the

application year, you are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations.

**Q. What enrollment options exist?**

- A. Enrollment options are: 30-year and permanent easements; 10-year, 15-year, 20-year or 30-year rental agreements; and restoration agreements which may be used in conjunction with any easement or rental agreement.

**Q. Who holds the easement?**

- A. The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) holds the easement, unless the Secretary authorizes a private conservation or land trust organization or State agency to hold or enforce an easement. Provisions for delegating easement administration to a third party will be outlined in a future regulation.

**Q. What are the requirements of the GRP?**

- A. All enrollment options permit:

- Common grazing practices that maintain the viability of the grassland;
- Haying, mowing, or harvesting for seed production, subject to certain restrictions during the nesting season, as determined by NRCS; and
- Fire rehabilitation and construction of fire breaks and fences.

GRP rental agreements and easements prohibit: 1) Production of crops (other than hay) that require breaking the soil surface, as well as fruit trees and vineyards; and 2) any other activity that would disturb the surface of the land, except for appropriate land management activities included in a

conservation plan. Participants will be required to follow a conservation plan developed by NRCS (or a designated third party) and the participant to preserve the integrity of the grassland.

USDA will use a standard easement deed. Landowners who participate in an easement option agree to:

- Provide a written statement of consent to the easement from those holding a security interest or any vested interest in the land;
- Provide proof of clear title;
- Comply with other terms of the easement; and
- Provide access to NRCS or its representative for easement administration and monitoring activities.

**Q. Is land enrolled in GRP subject to conservation compliance and swampbuster?**

- A. Yes, persons interested in participating in GRP must meet the swampbuster and conservation compliance provisions.

**Q. When is a restoration agreement developed?**

- A. A restoration agreement is developed when the grassland functions and values of the land need to be improved. NRCS, working in conjunction with the conservation district and the participant, determines if a restoration agreement is a necessary part of the rental agreement or easement.

**Q. How do I apply for the program?**

- A. To participate, interested persons submit an application to their local NRCS or FSA office in the local USDA Service Center. Applications for the program are accepted at any time.

**Q. How is the contract or easement value determined?**

- A. The value of an easement is determined through a professional appraisal. The landowner is paid the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land. For 30-year easements or an easement for the maximum duration allowed under State or Tribal law, a landowner receives 30 percent of the fair market value of the land, less the grazing value of the land.

For 10-, 15-, 20-, and 30-year rental agreements, the participant receives not more than 75 percent of the grazing value in an annual payment for the length of the agreement. Grazing values will be determined based on local prevailing rental rates.

**Q. Can GRP easements or agreements be terminated to enroll lands in other conservation programs?**

- A. There are no termination provisions in GRP easements. For rental agreements, decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the NRCS State Conservationist in consultation with the FSA State Executive Director. The rule making process will determine the final procedures.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about GRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/> and <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/GRP/default1.htm>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.



## **Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI)**

The Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI) is a nationwide collaborative process of individuals and organizations working to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation's privately owned grazing land. This process has formed coalitions that represent the grass root concerns that impact private grazing land. The coalitions actively seek sources to increase technical assistance and public awareness activities that maintain or enhance grazing land resources.

### **Introduction**

Privately owned grazing land of the United States are truly a national treasure. There are many uses and values that make them extremely important, not only to the landowners, but also to the entire nation. Other non-federal lands making similar contribution include state, local government, and tribal lands. The opportunity exists for a national initiative to assure the sustainability of all private grazing lands to enhance these lands for future use and to inform the public of the benefits of making this national commitment and investment.

### **Background**

Private grazing land in the United States has provided many products and benefits to their owners and to society for over 200 years. Historical use of these lands occurred without the benefit of grazing land science, as we know it today. Today there are more potential conflicts than ever before on private grazing lands within the United States. Demands by landowners and society for grazing land benefits, values, and products are increasing. Private landowners require a solid economic business.

Society benefits from an available supply of food and fiber; clean air, healthy wildlife populations and habitat; improved fisheries and aquatic systems; and healthy riparian areas. These lands provide opportunities for improved nutrient management from land application of animal manure and other by-product nutrient sources, reduces soil erosion from wind and water, reduces potential for flooding, less sediment in streams and reservoirs, and has a major impact on economic and social stability in rural communities.

Owners of private grazing lands must continue to recognize conservation problems and opportunities and receive sound voluntary technical assistance to improve their grazing land resource to meet ecological and economic demands.

### **The Initiative**

The Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative is a nationwide collaborative process of individuals and organizations working together to maintain and improve the management, productivity, and health of the Nation's privately owned grazing land. GLCI was developed to provide for a coordinated effort to identify priority issues, find solutions, and effect change on private grazing land. This initiative will complement and enhance existing conservation programs.

There is a National GLCI Steering Committee and many state committees throughout the country. Coalitions represent the grass root concerns that impact private grazing land. Concerns are expressed to the public and agency officials in an attempt to address the issues impacting private grazing land.

## Strategies

GLCI seeks to strengthen partnerships, promote voluntary assistance and participation, respects private property rights, encourages diversification to achieve multiple benefits, and emphasizes training, education, and increased public awareness. Private grazing landowners are eager to voluntarily improve their lands. However, they need technical assistance to help them use the latest and best technology to make grazing land management decisions. Existing technical assistance is limited for those who own grazing land and does not meet the needs for adequately sustaining or enhancing the resources.

## Progress

Through GLCI efforts, Congress has identified funds in the Natural Resources Conservation Services' budget to be used directly for technical assistance and public awareness activities to support conservation activities on private grazing lands.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is one of the primary players in the initiative. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the technical agency of the US Department of Agriculture that provides assistance to conservation districts and individuals in planning and carrying out conservation activities.

NRCS has the expertise and experience to provide technical assistance to owners and managers of private grazing land for the long-term productivity and ecological health of grazing land. NRCS assists with public awareness activities to inform the public on the values and benefits of private grazing land.

## Coalitions

Coalitions are made up of individuals and organizations that work collectively to accomplish the goals and objectives of the initiative. When opportunities exist, coalitions can be expanded to include individuals and organizations that have an interest in private grazing lands to help achieve the objectives of the initiative. Generally, personnel from government agencies and universities serve in an advisory capacity to the coalitions.

Coalitions actively seek sources to increase technical assistance and public awareness activities that maintain or enhance grazing land resources. State and local coalitions support national strategies and also develop local strategies and goals to meet their local needs.

## Summary

Today and tomorrow's decision-makers must have an ecological understanding of the grazing land resources to make wise land management decisions that will provide for present and future demands of the resource. It is imperative that adequate technical assistance is available by personnel trained in grazing management to help landowners use the latest and best technology.

This assistance will provide owners and managers of private grazing land information to make management decisions that will conserve and enhance private grazing land resources and provide related benefits to all citizens of the United States.

## For More Information

Contact your state or local GLCI coalition, your local conservation district, or NRCS for more information. Information is also available on the coalition web site: <http://www.glci.org>.

These documents requires [Adobe Acrobat](#).



[Summary](#)

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## Contact

[Mitch Flanagan](#), National Program Manager, 202-690-5988



# Farm Bill 2002

## Fact Sheet

March 2003

## ***Resource Conservation and Development Program***

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### ***Overview***

The Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The purpose of the RC&D program is to encourage and improve the capability of volunteer local elected and civic leaders in designated RC&D areas to plan and carry out projects for resource conservation and community development. Program objectives focus on quality of life improvements achieved through natural resources conservation and community development. Such activities lead to sustainable communities, prudent land use, and the sound management and conservation of natural resources.

### ***Benefits/Accomplishments***

The RC&D program pulls together people, communities, Indian tribes, and grassroots groups that unite in shared purpose and pool resources to get work done. More than 20,000 volunteers are serving on and with RC&D councils. They are committed to revitalizing and sustaining their communities through the RC&D program. To date, 368 areas across the Nation (plus the Caribbean and Pacific Basins) have been designated by the Secretary of Agriculture as RC&D areas. They serve more than 85 percent (2,614) of U.S. counties and over 77 percent of the U.S. population. NRCS's goal is to have nationwide coverage by 2005.

In fiscal year 2001, RC&Ds completed more than 3,000 projects. These resulted in 500 businesses created and 1,800 businesses expanded; 7,500 jobs created; 5,000 miles of streams and 880,000 acres of wildlife habitat improved. Over 283,000 people learned new job skills, and nearly 780,000 economically and socially disadvantaged people were served.

### ***How RC&D Works***

Assistance is provided, as authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture, to designated RC&D areas through their organized RC&D councils (comprised of local leaders). RC&D councils and their sponsors, in association with State, local, and Federal governments and nonprofit organizations, develop and implement local RC&D area plans. Councils also obtain assistance from other local, State, and Federal agencies; private organizations; and foundations. RC&D priorities are set by area residents to meet their needs.

### ***Eligibility***

Technical assistance is available to RC&D areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. Technical assistance is available for planning and installing approved projects specified in RC&D area plans, for land conservation, water management, community development, and environmental enhancement elements.





# Farm Bill 2002

## Questions and Answers

March 2003

## *Resource Conservation and Development Program*

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**Q. Are there any significant changes to the Resource Conservation and Development Program (RC&D) Statute?**

**A. There are several significant changes:**

- Permanent authorization of the RC&D program;
- More accurate description of the program as it currently operates;
- Additions of the role and definition of an RC&D council;
- Acknowledgment of participation by Tribes in the program; and
- A requirement that a program evaluation and report to the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction be made by June 30, 2005.

**Q. Will the new Farm Bill affect how NRCS manages the RC&D program?**

- A. The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) language more closely resembles how the program is currently working. The language changes will enable NRCS to more effectively manage the program and strengthen its assistance to RC&D councils.**

**Q. Have there been any changes in the number of designated RC&D areas allowed by law?**

- A. No. The number of allowable designated areas remains 450.**

***For More Information***

If you need more information about RC&D, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

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## Soil Survey Programs

The National Cooperative Soil Survey Program (NCSS) is a partnership led by NRCS of Federal land management agencies, state agricultural experiment stations and state and local units of government that provide soil survey information necessary for understanding, managing, conserving and sustaining the nation's limited soil resources.

Soil surveys provide an orderly, on-the-ground, scientific inventory of soil resources that includes maps showing the locations and extent of soils, data about the physical and chemical properties of those soils, and information derived from that data about potentialities and problems of use on each kind of soil in sufficient detail to meet all reasonable needs for farmers, agricultural technicians, community planners, engineers, and scientists in planning and transferring the findings of research and experience to specific land areas. Soil surveys provide the basic information needed to manage soil sustainably. They also provide information needed to protect water quality, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. Soil surveys are the basis for predicting the behavior of a soil under alternative uses, its potential erosion hazard, potential for ground water contamination, suitability and productivity for cultivated crops, trees, and grasses. Soil surveys are important to planners, engineers, zoning commissions, tax commissioners, homeowners, developers, as well as agricultural producers. Soil surveys also provide a basis to help predict the effect of global climate change on worldwide agricultural production and other land-dependent processes. The NRCS Soil Survey Division through its World Soil Resources Staff helps gather and interpret soil information for global use.

NRCS provides the soil surveys for the privately owned lands of the nation and, through its National Soil Survey Center, provides scientific expertise to enable the NCSS to develop and maintain a uniform system for mapping and assessing soil resources so that soil information from different locations can be shared, regardless of which agency collects it. NRCS provides most of the training in soil survey to Federal agencies and assists other Federal agencies with their soil inventories on a reimbursable basis. NRCS is also responsible for developing the standards and mechanisms for providing digital soil information for the national spatial data infrastructure required by Executive Order 12906.



## Soil and Water Conservation Assistance

### Fact Sheet

*Note: Soil and Water Conservation Assistance (SWCA) is authorized under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Title II, Section 211(b) (Public Law 106-224).*

### Introduction

Soil and Water Conservation Assistance (SWCA) provides cost share and incentive payments to farmers and ranchers to voluntarily address threats to soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. SWCA will help landowners comply with Federal and state environmental laws and make beneficial, cost-effective changes to cropping systems, grazing management, nutrient management, and irrigation.

### How SWCA Works

SWCA is available nationwide, but only in areas that are **not** part of:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) priority areas,
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) priority areas, or
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) national priority areas.

Applicants may request SWCA assistance at any time by submitting an application to the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or conservation district office. The application (form CCC-1200) is available at the local USDA Service Center or on the Web at [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov).

A conservation plan is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the SWCA contract. NRCS will work with the landowner to develop a conservation plan. Landowners must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice. Contracts are for five to ten years.

The NRCS state conservationist, in consultation with the State Technical Committee, will determine eligible practices using a locally led process. The Federal cost share is 75 percent of the cost of an eligible practice. Participants will be paid based upon certification of completion of the approved practice.

### Eligibility

Applicants must own or control the land and agree to implement specific eligible conservation practices. Eligible land:

- Cropland
- Hayland
- Pasture and rangeland
- Land used for subsistence purposes
- Other land (such as forestland) that produces crops or livestock where there is a serious threat to soil, water, or related natural resources.

## Questions and Answers

# Conservation on the Land

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United States Department of Agriculture

## Soil and Water Conservation Assistance

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**Note:** Soil and Water Conservation Assistance (SWCA) is authorized under the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000, Title II, Section 211(b) (Public Law 106-224).

NRCS—Natural Resources Conservation Service  
USDA—U.S. Department of Agriculture  
SWCA—Soil and Water Conservation Assistance

### **Q. Is a conservation plan required?**

**A.** SWCA is available nationwide, but only in areas that are **not** part of:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) priority areas,
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) priority areas, or
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) national priority areas.

### **Q. Where are SWCA applications accepted?**

**A.** SWCA applications will be accepted at local NRCS or conservation district offices. Other agricultural or natural resource agencies may assist with accepting applications. The application (form CCC-1200) is available at the local USDA Service Center or on the Web at [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov).

### **Q. What is the maximum cost-share amount allowed for each SWCA contract?**

**A.** The maximum total payment per participant shall not exceed \$50,000. The Federal cost share is 75 percent of the cost of an eligible practice.

### **Q. When will sign-ups begin?**

**A.** Interested landowners may begin submitting SWCA applications under a continuous sign-up. Cutoff dates for ranking the applications will be determined by the NRCS state conservationist in consultation with the State Technical Committee.

### **Q. Is a conservation plan required?**

**A.** A conservation plan is required for the area covered in the application and becomes the basis for developing the SWCA contract. NRCS will work with the landowner to develop a conservation plan.

### **Q. Will practices be maintained after contracts expire?**

**A.** Landowners must agree to maintain cost-shared practices for the life of the practice, which may extend beyond the end of the contract. USDA hopes SWCA participants will want to continue to voluntarily address threats to soil, water, and related natural resources on their farm or ranch.

### **What land is eligible for SWCA?**

The following land is eligible for SWCA:

- Cropland,
- Hayland,
- Pasture and rangeland,
- Land used for subsistence purposes, and
- Other land (such as forestland) that produces crops or livestock where there is a serious threat to soil, water, or related natural resources.

### **When are payments made?**

Participants will be paid upon certification that the approved practice has been completed according to NRCS standards and specifications.

### **Who determines which applications are funded?**

Applications are selected based on a state-developed ranking and selection process. The ranking criteria will:

- Address threats to soil, water, and related natural resources, including grazing land, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.
- Comply with Federal and state environmental laws.
- Make beneficial, cost-effective changes to cropping systems, grazing management, nutrient management, irrigation, land use, or other measures needed to conserve and improve natural resources.

### **Q. Is additional information available on SWCA?**

- A.** NRCS or your local conservation district can provide more information. Your USDA Service Center is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture. Information also is available on the Web at [www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/COD/codindex.htm](http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/COD/codindex.htm).



## **Watershed Protection, Watershed Surveys, and Flood Prevention**

### **Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program**

The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, P.L. 83-566, August 4, 1954, (16 U.S.C. 1001-1008) authorized this program. Prior to fiscal year 1996, watershed planning activities and the cooperative river basin surveys and investigations authorized by Section 6 of the Act were operated as separate programs. The 1996 appropriations act combined the activities into a single program entitled the Watershed Surveys and Planning program. Activities under both programs are continuing under this authority.

[...More Info](#)

### **Watershed Surveys and Plans**

Types of surveys and plans include watershed plans, river basin surveys and studies, flood hazard analyses, and flood plain management assistance. The focus of these plans is to identify solutions that use conservation practice and nonstructural measures to solve resource problems.

[...More Info](#)

### **A Locally Led Program**

Project sponsors are provided assistance in installing planned land treatment measures when plans are approved. Surveys and investigations are made and detailed designs, specifications, and engineering cost estimates are prepared for construction of structural measures. Areas where sponsors need to obtain land rights, easements, and rights-of-way are delineated. Technical assistance is also furnished to landowners and operators to accelerate planning and application of needed conservation measures on their individual land units. There are presently over 1600 projects in operation.

[...More Info](#)

### **Flood Prevention Program (PL 78-534)**

The Flood Control Act of December 22, 1944 authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to install watershed improvement measures to reduce flood, sedimentation, and erosion damages; further the conservation, development, utilization, and disposal of water; and the conservation and proper utilization of land.

[...More Info](#)

### **More Program Information**

- [Watershed Rehabilitation](#)
- [National Watershed Manual](#)
- [Watershed Program Success Stories](#)

- [Watershed Program Status Reports](#)
- [Watershed Project Locations](#)
- [Watershed Program Funding](#)

### **Program Contact**

[Stuart Simpson](#), National Watershed Program Leader, 202-720-8770

## Fact Sheet

March 2003

## Wetlands Reserve Program

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### Overview

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. WRP is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program. Funding for WRP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

### Benefits

WRP participants benefit by:

- Receiving financial and technical assistance in return for restoring and protecting wetland functions and values;
- Seeing a reduction in problems associated with farming potentially difficult areas; and
- Having incentives to develop wildlife recreational opportunities on their land.

Wetlands benefit the Nation by providing fish and wildlife habitat; improving water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals; reducing flooding; recharging groundwater; protecting biological diversity; as well as providing opportunities for educational, scientific, and recreational activities.

### How WRP Works

Landowners and Tribes may file an application for a conservation easement or a cost-share

restoration agreement with the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (USDA) to restore and protect wetlands. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land, but retain private ownership.

The program offers three enrollment options:

*Permanent Easement.* This is a conservation easement in perpetuity. Easement payments for this option equal the lowest of three amounts: the agricultural value of the land, an established payment cap, or an amount offered by the landowner. In addition to paying for the easement, USDA pays 100 percent of the costs of restoring the wetland.

*30-Year Easement.* Easement payments through this option are 75 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. USDA also pays 75 percent of restoration costs.

For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

*Restoration Cost-Share Agreement.* This is an agreement (generally for a minimum of 10 years) to re-establish degraded or lost wetland habitat. USDA pays 75 percent of the cost of the restoration activity. This enrollment option does not place an easement on the property. Other agencies, conservation districts, and private conservation organizations may provide additional assistance for easement payments and wetland restoration costs as a way to reduce the landowner's share of the



costs. Such special partnership efforts are encouraged.

NRCS and its partners, including conservation districts, continue to provide assistance to landowners after completion of restoration activities. This assistance may be in the form of reviewing restoration measures, clarifying technical and administrative aspects of the easement and project management needs, and providing basic biological and engineering advice on how to achieve optimum results for wetland dependent species.

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. Applications may be obtained and filed at any time with your local USDA Service Center or conservation district office. Applications also may be obtained through USDA's e-gov Internet site at: [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov). Enter Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Agency field, Wetlands Reserve Program in the Program Name field, and CCC-1250 in the Form Number field.

### ***Eligibility***

To offer a conservation easement, the landowner must have owned the land for at least 12 months prior to enrolling it in the program, unless the land was inherited, the landowner exercised the landowner's right of redemption after foreclosure, or the landowner can prove the land was not obtained for the purpose of enrolling it in the program. To participate in a restoration cost-share agreement, the landowner must show evidence of ownership.

To be eligible for WRP, land must be restorable and be suitable for wildlife benefits. This includes:

- Wetlands farmed under natural conditions;
- Farmed wetlands;
- Prior converted cropland;
- Farmed wetland pasture;

- Farmland that has become a wetland as a result of flooding;
- Range land, pasture, or production forest land where the hydrology has been significantly degraded and can be restored;
- Riparian areas which link protected wetlands;
- Lands adjacent to protected wetlands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values; and
- Previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection.

***Ineligible Land.*** Ineligible land includes wetlands converted after December 23, 1985; lands with timber stands established under a Conservation Reserve Program contract; Federal lands; and lands where conditions make restoration impossible.

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for WRP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

### ***Uses of WRP Land***

On acreage subject to a WRP easement, participants control access to the land and may lease the land for hunting, fishing, and other undeveloped recreational activities. At any time, a participant may request that additional activities be evaluated to determine if they are compatible uses for the site. This request may include such items as permission to cut hay, graze livestock, or harvest wood products. Compatible uses are allowed if they are fully consistent with the protection and enhancement of the wetland.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about WRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

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## Questions and Answers

March 2003

## ***Wetlands Reserve Program***

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### **Q. What is the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)?**

- A.** The WRP is a voluntary program offering landowners financial and technical assistance to restore and protect wetlands and associated uplands through permanent easements, 30-year easements, and long-term restoration agreements. The program is designed to achieve maximum wetland functions and values while obtaining optimum wildlife habitat.

Eligible land includes wetlands cleared or drained for farming, pasture, or timber production; certain adjacent lands that contribute significantly to wetland functions and values; previously restored wetlands that need long-term protection; upland areas needed to provide an adequate buffer or that contribute to creating a manageable boundary; drained wooded wetlands; existing or restorable riparian habitat corridors that connect protected wetlands; and certain lands substantially altered by flooding. The land must be restorable and be suitable for providing wildlife benefits.

### **Q. How did the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) change WRP?**

- A.** The 2002 Farm Bill reauthorized the program through 2007; raised the total acreage enrollment cap to 2,275,000 acres; directed the Secretary to enroll, to the maximum extent practicable, 250,000

acres per calendar year; and added an exemption to the 12-month ownership requirement for landowners who exercised their right to redemption after foreclosure.

### **Q. Do you have to be a landowner to participate in WRP?**

- A.** Only landowners and Tribes can participate in WRP. For easement projects, eligible landowners are those who can provide clear title to the land and, with some exceptions, those who have owned the property for 12 months prior to filing an application. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office for more information about this provision. To participate in a long-term agreement, landowners must show evidence of ownership since these agreements do not involve the transfer of land rights.

### **Q. How does a landowner or Tribe participate in WRP?**

- A.** Applications for WRP are accepted at any time. To participate, landowners and Tribes submit an application with their local NRCS office or conservation district office. Applications may be obtained through these offices or through USDA's e-gov Internet site at: [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov). Enter Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Agency field, Wetlands Reserve Program in the Program Name field, and CCC-1250 in the Form Number field.

**Q. Could the Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impact my participation in the WRP?**

- A. Yes, if you are an individual or entity that has an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the application year, you are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

**Q. How are applicants selected?**

- A. Applications are ranked and selected at the State level. The ranking and selection criteria are established at the State level within broad National guidelines. Interested persons can obtain ranking and selection criteria through local NRCS offices.

**Q. What are a participant's responsibilities and rights under a WRP easement?**

- A. When a landowner or Tribe enrolls in one of the WRP easement options, the landowner or Tribe is selling a real property interest to the United States. After an easement is recorded in the local land records office, the landowner or Tribe retains ownership and responsibility for the land, including any property taxes. The landowner or Tribe controls access to the land; has the right to hunt and fish and pursue other undeveloped recreational uses; and may sell or lease land enrolled in the program.

Participating landowners and Tribes may request other uses, such as haying, grazing, or harvesting timber under certain conditions. Requests are approved if NRCS determines that the activity further

enhances or protects the purposes for which the easement was acquired. Requests for compatible uses may be made throughout the life of the easement or agreement.

**Q. How is an easement value determined?**

- A. Easement values generally are determined by a professional appraisal of the agricultural value of the land, a geographical area rate cap established by NRCS at the State level, or an amount offered by the landowner.

**Q. Is there a limit on the number of acres a landowner may enroll in the program?**

- A. There is no national limitation on the amount of land that can be offered for the program. However, a State may establish an acreage enrollment limitation. Contact the local NRCS office to find out whether there are acreage limitations in your State.

**Q. Does the applicant need to hire a closing agent, appraiser, surveyor, or lawyer?**

- A. No. NRCS makes arrangements for these services.

**Q. What is the role of conservation districts?**

- A. Conservation districts assist NRCS with program implementation through the following activities:
- Identifying priority areas within their district;
  - Providing input to the State Technical Committee;
  - Assisting with the development of cost-share rates;
  - Assisting with the development and implementation of conservation planning; and
  - Assisting with local outreach and educational efforts.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about WRP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
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## Fact Sheet

March 2003

## Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

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### Overview

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property.

WHIP is reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill). Through WHIP, NRCS works with private landowners and operators; conservation districts; and Federal, State, and Tribal agencies to develop wildlife habitat on their property. Funding for WHIP comes from the Commodity Credit Corporation.

### Benefits

Since WHIP began in 1998, nearly 11,000 participants have enrolled more than 1.6 million acres into the program. Most efforts have concentrated on improving upland wildlife habitat, such as native prairie, but there is an increasing emphasis on improving riparian and aquatic areas. The 2002 Farm Bill greatly expands the available tools for improving wildlife habitat conditions across the Nation.

Species that have benefited from WHIP activities include the grasshopper sparrow, bobwhite quail, swift fox, short-eared owl, Karner-blue butterfly, gopher tortoise, Louisiana black bear, Eastern collared lizard,

Bachman's sparrow, ovenbird, and acorn woodpecker.

### How WHIP Works

Conservation districts convene local work groups to identify local wildlife habitat priorities. The local work groups then provide input to the State Technical Committee that advises the State conservationist in the development of a State WHIP plan. The State WHIP plan serves as a guide for the development of the State WHIP ranking criteria.

Persons interested in entering into a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop wildlife habitat may file an application at any time. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land for a period of time, but retain private ownership.

NRCS works with the participant to develop a wildlife habitat development plan. This plan becomes the basis of the cost-share agreement between NRCS and the participant. NRCS provides cost-share payments to landowners under these agreements that are usually 5 to 10 years in duration, depending upon the practices to be installed.

There are shorter-term agreements to install practices that are needed to meet wildlife emergencies, as approved by the NRCS State conservationist. NRCS also provides greater cost-share assistance to landowners who enter into agreements of 15 years or more for practices on essential plant and animal habitat. NRCS can use up to 15 percent of its available WHIP funds for this purpose.

NRCS does not place limits on the number of acres that can be enrolled in the program or the amount of payment made; however, some States may choose to establish such requirements. NRCS welcomes projects that provide valuable wildlife habitat and does not want to discourage any landowner who desires to implement practices that will improve habitat conditions for declining species.

NRCS continues to provide assistance to landowners after completion of habitat development activities. This assistance may be in the form of monitoring habitat practices, reviewing management guidelines, or providing basic biological and engineering advice on how to achieve optimum results for targeted species.

Applications are accepted through a continuous sign-up process. Applications may be obtained and filed at any time with your local USDA Service Center or conservation district office. Applications also may be obtained through USDA's e-gov Internet site at: [www.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://www.sc.egov.usda.gov). Enter Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Agency field, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program in the Program Name field, and CCC-1250 in the Form Number field. Applications also may be accepted by cooperating conservation partners approved or designated by NRCS.

### ***Eligibility***

Eligible lands under the program are:

- Privately owned land;
- Federal land when the primary benefit is on private or Tribal land;
- State and local government land on a limited basis; and
- Tribal land.

If land is determined eligible, NRCS places emphasis on enrolling:

- Habitat areas for wildlife species experiencing declining or significantly reduced populations;
- Practices beneficial to fish and wildlife that may not otherwise be funded; and
- Wildlife and fishery habitats identified by local and State partners and Indian Tribes in each State.

The Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impacts eligibility for WHIP and several other 2002 Farm Bill programs. Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the year the contract is approved are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

### ***For More Information***

If you need more information about WHIP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



Visit USDA on the Web at:  
<http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>

**Note:** This is not intended to be a definitive interpretation of farm legislation. Rather, it is preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.

## Questions and Answers

March 2003

## *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program*

---

**Q. What is the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)?**

assist you with these program requirements.

**A.** WHIP is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides cost-share payments for development and protection of upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas.

**Q. Where are WHIP applications accepted?**

**A.** WHIP applications are accepted at local USDA Service Centers or conservation district offices. They also may be accepted by cooperating conservation partners approved or designated by NRCS.

**Q. What land is eligible for WHIP?**

**A.** Eligible lands include privately owned land; Federal land when the primary benefit is on private or Tribal land; State and local government land on a limited basis; and Tribal land.

**Q. I do not currently participate in Farm Bill programs. Am I eligible to participate in WHIP?**

**A.** You are welcome to participate in the program. If you enroll land in the program, you will need to meet certain conservation compliance and wetland conservation requirements. Your local NRCS office will

**Q. Could the Adjusted Gross Income provision of the 2002 Farm Bill impact my participation in WHIP?**

**A.** Yes, if you are an individual or entity that has an average adjusted gross income exceeding \$2.5 million for the three tax years immediately preceding the application year, you are not eligible to receive program benefits or payments. However, an exemption is provided in cases where 75 percent of the adjusted gross income is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operations. The final rule for this provision has not yet been published.

**Q. How long in duration are WHIP agreements?**

**A.** WHIP provides cost-share payments to landowners under agreements that are usually 5 to 10 years in duration, depending upon the practices to be installed. There are shorter-term agreements to install practices that are needed to meet wildlife emergencies, as approved by the NRCS State conservationist. NRCS also can enter into 15-year agreements with program participants who wish to undertake habitat development practices on essential plant and animal habitat. Up to 15 percent of WHIP funds are available for 15-year agreements.



**Q. What is the minimum acreage required or the maximum acreage or payments allowed?**

**A.** NRCS does not place limits on the number of acres that can be enrolled in the program or the amount of payment made; however, some States may choose to establish such requirements. NRCS welcomes projects that provide valuable wildlife habitat and does not want to discourage any landowner who desires to implement practices that will improve habitat conditions for declining species.

**Q. Who determines which applications are funded**

**A.** NRCS selects applications based on State developed ranking processes that achieve State specific wildlife goals and objectives. Conservation districts convene local work groups to identify local wildlife habitat priorities. The local work groups provide input to the State Technical Committee that works with the State conservationist to develop a State WHIP plan. The ranking process is derived from the priorities identified in the State WHIP plan.

**Q. Are landowners required to give the public access to land developed or protected under WHIP?**

**A.** No. Landowners can prevent trespass and control access by the general public. The landowner must allow NRCS access to the area to monitor the effectiveness of the practices during the agreement period.

***For More Information***

If you need more information about WHIP, please contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



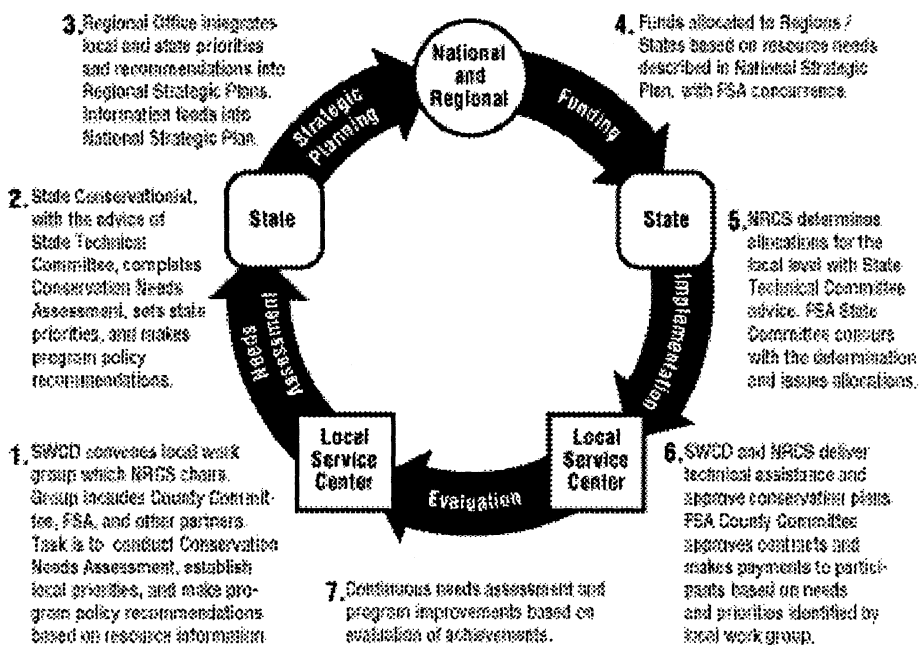
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**NRCS Q&A Legal Disclaimer:** These questions and answers are not intended to be definitive interpretations of farm legislation. Rather, they are preliminary and may change as USDA develops implementing policies and procedures. Please check back for updates.



## Conservation Program Delivery

### NRCS Leadership with FSA Concurrence

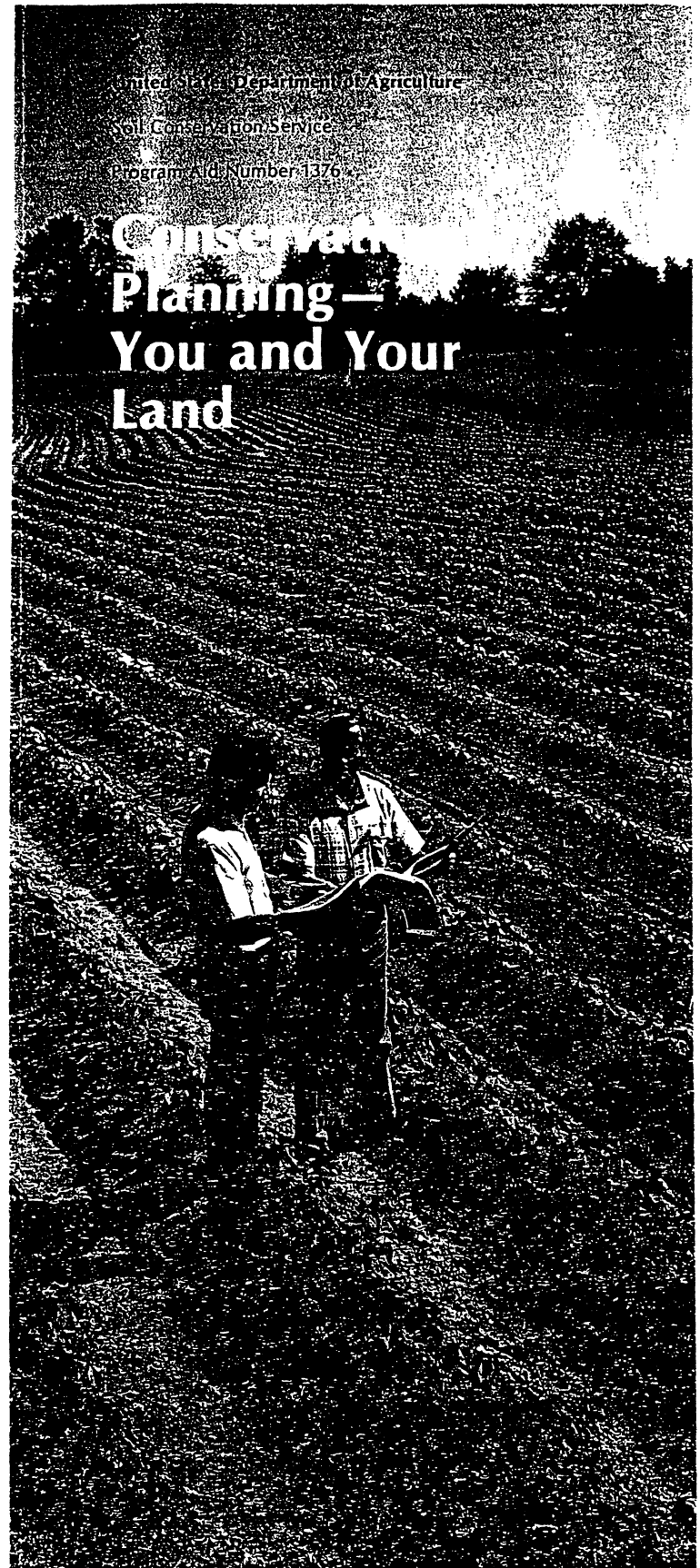


## For More Information

For assistance and more detailed information contact your local conservation district or the Soil Conservation Service. They are listed in the telephone directory. The Soil Conservation Service is listed under United States Government, Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Assistance is available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin.



*Selective cuttings are made periodically in this well-managed woodlot.*



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service

Program Aid Number 1376

# Conservation Planning— You and Your Land

## Conservation Planning You and Your Land

Two-thirds of the land in America is owned by private landowners. These landowners are responsible for the present and future condition of the soil, water, and other natural resources on their land.

All land is not the same. Take a good look at the land you own or use. Observe how it differs from your neighbors'. Most likely your land has several soil types. Soils vary in depth, drainage, erodibility, natural productivity, slope, texture, and stoniness. Other resources—water, plants, and animals—also vary from one property to another. These characteristics will affect how you use your land. Because your land is unique, so should be the planning for its uses.

You use your land differently from anyone else. You don't have exactly the same equipment or manage the land the same. You don't grow the same crops, apply the same fertilizers, keep the same kind and number of livestock, or have the same goals and objectives. However, in some ways you are like all land users: you continually plan how to manage your land. Short-term plans may include crops to grow and livestock to raise or sell. Long-term plans may consider protecting or developing soil and water resources.

You probably do a lot of thinking and planning about how to farm more efficiently and how to protect the soil from wind and water erosion so that it will continue to produce good crops year after year. You may also plan how to use your land for purposes other than farming. This is just the beginning of conservation planning.

## Help is Available

Conservation planning assistance is available through the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. SCS provides free help through this voluntary participation program, which is available to all land users through the soil and water conservation districts. Conservation districts are local units of government which are guided by a governing board made up of local farmers, ranchers, other land users, and community leaders in a county.

Help from your local SCS soil conservationist may be requested through your conservation district. Although most SCS assistance is provided to farmers and ranchers on cropland, pasture, rangeland, and forest land, you can also get assistance with solving conservation problems on nonagricultural land uses, such as controlling erosion on construction sites or on public lands.



*A district conservationist and a farm manager discuss a conservation plan for a wildlife management farm.*

March 1986

Slightly Revised August 1987

Reviewed and approved for reprinting July 1988

## Planning Together

Conservation planning involves several steps. The first step in planning is taking an inventory. Because a knowledge of soils is basic to planning the use and treatment of your land, SCS will provide you with a soils map, which includes a description of your soils and how they can be used. Each soil is described in terms of its texture, characteristics, capabilities, limitations, and erosion potential. SCS will also estimate soil erosion rates under present and planned land uses.

When you are ready to start, you and the soil conservationist will discuss the soils, your plans and goals, your resource problems, and your conservation program. You tell the soil conservationist which crops you want to grow, the livestock you want to keep, the wildlife or recreation uses you want to plan, and any other interests you have that will affect your land. The conservationist will have detailed data about your soil types and limitations, erosion potential, and production capability for your land and will help you interpret the data. Together you can explore different ways to overcome problems and to make better use of the soil. You can discuss soil and water management needs by individual fields on a total-farm basis.

Many things may be involved as you consider alternatives for your land. Major changes may be needed. Some cropland may need specific treatment to control erosion. Some cropland may need to be converted to use as pasture or for trees, recreation, or wildlife habitat. You may need to plant better forage species to improve rangeland or pasture. You may want to improve your woodland or improve wildlife habitat. You may have a good location for a farm pond for recreation, fire protection, livestock, or irrigation water. The conservationist can show you how these alternatives will meet your goals and also protect your land for many years.

## The Decisions Are Yours

The next step is deciding exactly how you are going to use your land. The SCS conservationist will outline and discuss the different ways you can accomplish your goals and help you determine the effects on your total operation before you make the decisions.

Decisions are needed on both the use of the land and its treatment. When you make a decision on land use, you will need to consider how to treat each field to get the desired results. These treatments are known as conservation practices. Usually several practices are used in combination to solve resource problems, resulting in a resource management system.

For example, on level cropland, the practices may be fertilizing and liming, crop rotation, and a form of crop residue management, such as no-till. On sloping cropland, you may need the additional resource protection of a terrace system, stripcropping, or grassed waterways.

On pasture, you may decide to plant both cool- and warm-season grasses or grasses and legumes. This will permit rotating pastures to provide grazing through the summer and fall months without weakening pasture vitality or making the land susceptible to erosion.

On forest land, you may plan to selectively thin the stand by cutting firewood, or you may plan to protect young trees from livestock grazing. Specific areas, borders, and fields may be selected to manage for wildlife habitat.

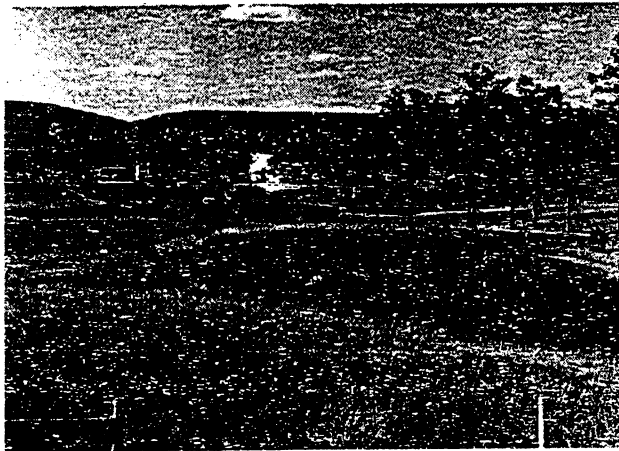
You make the decisions. The SCS conservationist can give many good alternatives and make some economic comparisons, but you must decide what you want to do, when, and how. Consider your available time, equipment, and economic situation.

The SCS conservationist can help you understand these conservation practices, how they fit together in a resource management system, and what is necessary to provide the maintenance for continued effectiveness in the future. He or she will record your decisions and other suggestions in your plan and will help you in scheduling and applying planned conservation. This plan will provide a guide for you for the next several years. It can be modified as your goals and objectives change.

## Applying Conservation Practices

The final step in your conservation plan is putting the plan into operation. You and the conservationist select the best time to build terraces, waterways, and other soil-conserving measures. Other practices that do not involve construction, such as crop residue use, field borders, and stripcropping, can be scheduled to fit into your operation at the best time.

SCS can assist with applying the practices, such as laying out grade lines for terraces, contour lines for stripcropping, and blueprints for water control structures. They have information about tree and shrub nurseries, and they can direct you to neighbors who have applied conservation practices similar to those you will be using. Special assistance may also be obtained from other federal, state, and local agencies; from private companies or organizations; and from SCS specialists such as foresters, agronomists, range conservationists, and biologists.



*SCS assisted in designing these three ponds for irrigation, wildlife habitat, and livestock watering.*

## Keep Your Plan Current

Your planning decisions, written into the conservation plan, provide you with a ready reference guide for your year-to-year operations. Market prices or other circumstances may change, making a change in your planning decisions and your conservation plan desirable. SCS conservationists can help you revise the land use and conservation treatment where needed.

Remember, in conservation planning—

- The program is voluntary and flexible
- You make the decisions and carry them out, including maintenance for a long and useful life of practices installed
- It is your plan for the land you own or use
- SCS and conservation districts are ready to help you.



*Corn is being planted in crop stubble between terraces.*

1998

# CONSERVATION DIRECTORY

43RD EDITION

*A list of organizations, agencies, and officials  
concerned with natural resource use and management*

Rue E. Gordon, Editor

Published annually by the  
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# **A Comprehensive Review of Farm Bill Contributions to Wildlife Conservation, 1985–2000**

## **Technical Report**

USDA/NRCS/WHMI-2000

December 2000

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# **Conservation Corridor Planning at the Landscape Level: Managing For Wildlife Habitat**

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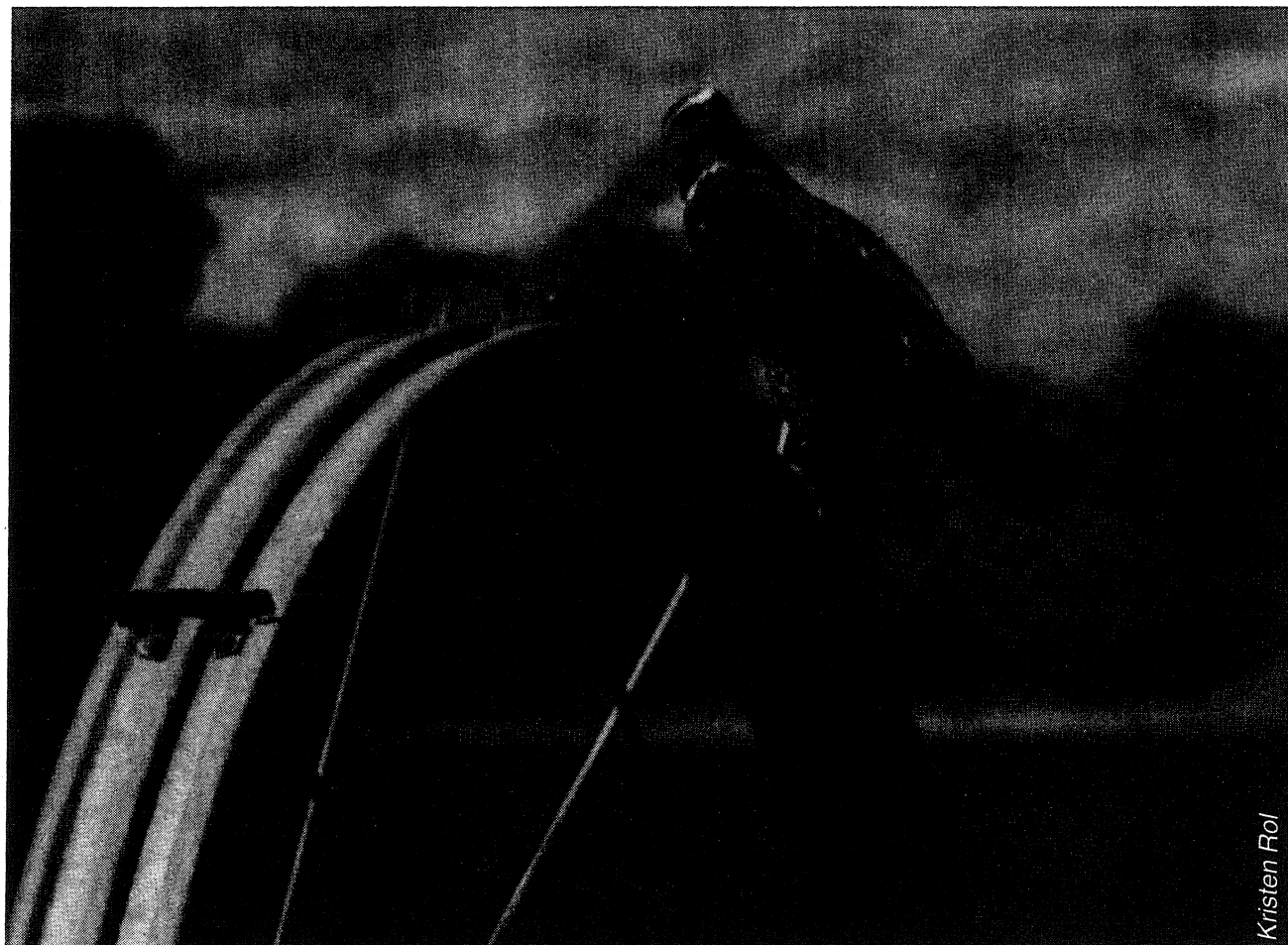
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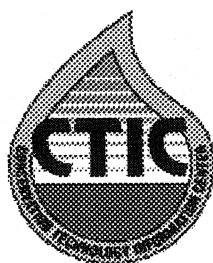
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CTIC was established in 1982 under the charter of the National Association of Conservation Districts, a non-profit conservation organization.

# Conservation Technology Information Center



United We Stand!

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### Confederation of American Associations for the Production of Sustainable Agriculture (CAAPAS)

### 10th Regional Wetlands and Water Resources Meeting: New Protection Challenges for Unprotected Waterbodies

### Explore the Baltics Watershed Partnership supported by CTIC

## **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### Better Soil Recipe

### Soil is Alive! See it with a Bursese Funnel!

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## **NATIONAL CROP RESIDUE MANAGEMENT SURVEY**

### 2002 Survey is available!

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### Midwest No-Till/Buffers Project

### Economic Benefits with Environmental Protection

### Better Soil, Better Yields

### Conservation Tillage and Plant Biotechnology: How New Technologies Can Improve the Environment By Reducing the Need to Plow

## **Core 4 Conservation**



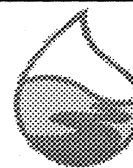
### **2002 Core 4 Conservation Award WINNERS!**

Choose a Core 4 Area

## **Know Your Watershed**

Know Your Watershed is an information clearinghouse for watershed coordinators to help assure measurable progress toward local goals.

Take the Watershed IQ Quiz!



## **PARTNER PROJECTS**

### 2002 Farm Bill Information

### 2002 Farm Bill National Conference

<b><u>** News Release Available **</u></b>	
<b>AwwaRF - Drinking Water Protection Initiative</b>	
<b>P R O D U C T S   C A T A L O G</b>	
❖ <u>Core 4 Conservation</u>	❖ <u>Crop Residue Mgmt</u>
❖ <u>Nutrient &amp; Pest Mgmt</u>	❖ <u>Urban Management</u>
❖ <u>Watershed Mgmt</u>	❖ <u>Youth Education</u>
<b>C A L E N D A R S</b>	
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❖ <u>Watershed related events</u>	





# National Association of Conservation Districts

## eNotes from November 1

### New Items

CEO Search Underway (11/1/03)

Forestry Coalition letter o  
(9-16-03)

NACD's CEO Announces I  
(8/20/03)

NACD Letter to USDA and  
Closings and Outsourcing

NACD Recommended Fur  
Natural Resource Program  
Legislative Status (8/17/03)

TSP Rule Amendment Pul

NACD letter on funding of  
Programs. (7/8/03)

NACD letter on "Recomm  
Appropriations for Select  
Programs" (7/7/03)

October Forestry Notes  
September BufferNotes

NACD Special Reports



NACD Directory
Districts on the Web
Resources for Districts
Government Affairs
Meetings & Events
Publications
Education
Public Outreach
How Do I Get Involved?
Contact NACD
Site Map

NACD is the national voice of America's 3,000 local conservation districts. By working with landowners, organizations and government, districts have helped to protect our soil, water, forests, wildlife and other resources for over 60 years.



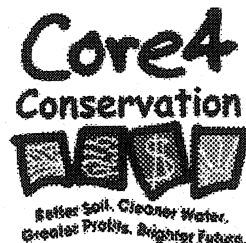
Click the Logo for Information on the  
**2004 NACD Annual Meeting - Register Now!**

Search NACD web sites!

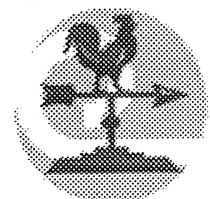
☒ Search nacdnet.org ☐ Search WWW

Partner Links: NCDEA | NRCS | USDA | CTIC | FSA | RD | FS | CSREES | NASCA | RC&Ds | N  
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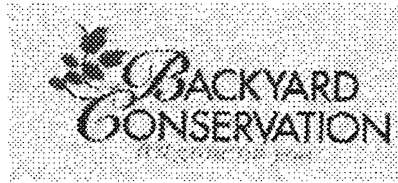


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USDA  
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National Farm Bill  
Conference  
Results



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You are free to use any of the material on these pages to further the conservation of natural resources. Crediting t  
Conservation Districts is not necessary, but would be appreciated.

**Conservation by any other name . . .**

There is often confusion about what to call conservation districts, er, natural resource districts...well, you get the picture. What we refer to as "conservation districts" (cd's) are referred to by several names under different state laws:

- Resource Conservation Districts in California,
- Soil Conservation Districts in most of the Northern Plains,
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts in much of the Southeast/Midwest and Hawaii,
- Conservation Districts on the East Coast,
- Natural Resources Districts in Nebraska, and
- Land Conservation Departments in Wisconsin



**N A S C A****HOME****CONTACT****LINKS**

***Welcome to the National Association of State Conservation  
Agencies Web Site.***

**Who are we?****Board of  
Directors****Membership****By-Laws****Policies****Diversity Plan****Newsletter****Future  
Meetings**

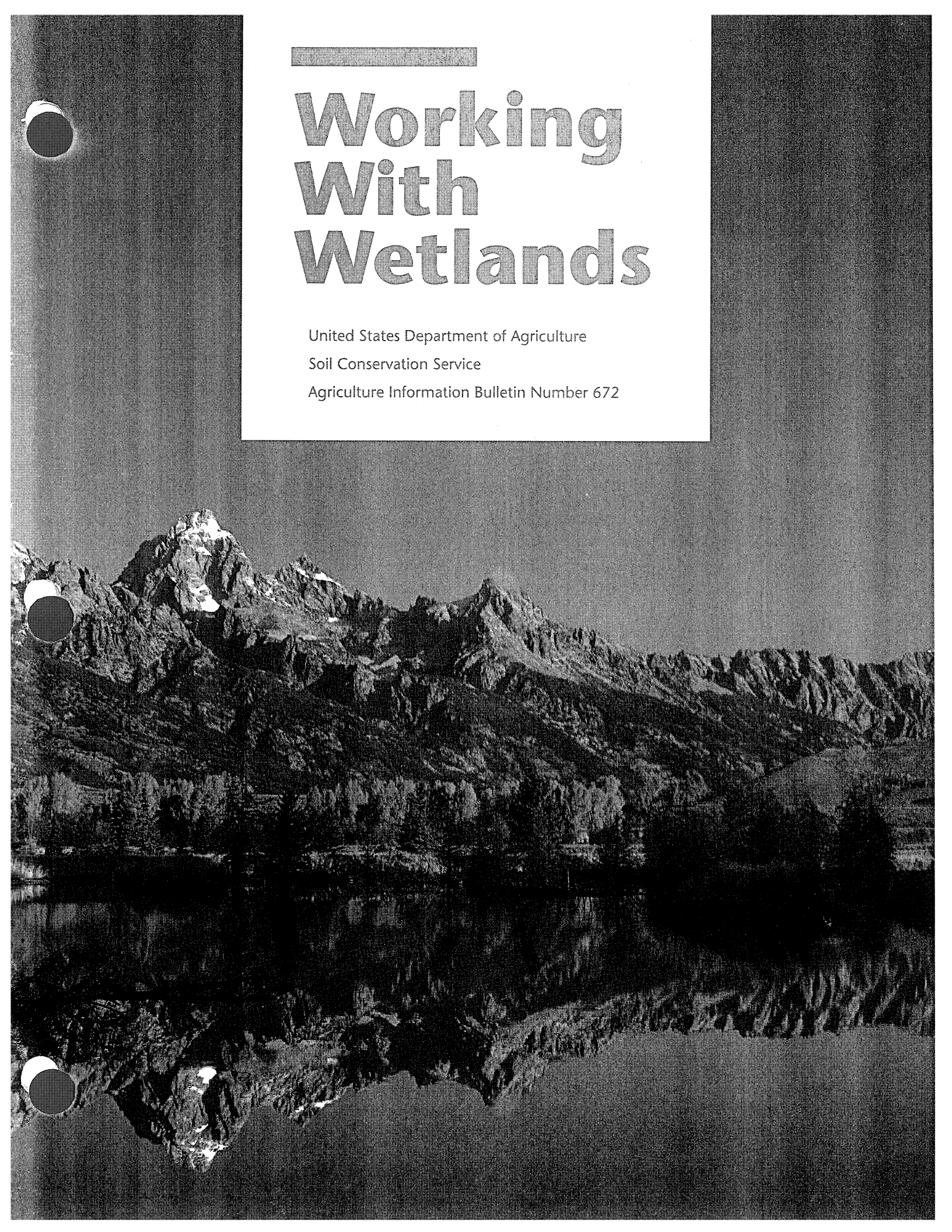
**The National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) is a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of state executive agencies responsible for the administration of soil, water and related natural resource programs.**

..

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# Working With Wetlands

United States Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
Agriculture Information Bulletin Number 672



# **ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PROTECTING RIVERS, TRAILS, AND GREENWAY CORRIDORS**

**A RESOURCE BOOK**

**RIVERS, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**1991**  
Second Edition

## What You Need to Know About this Resource Book



---

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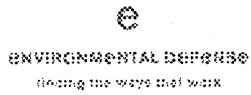
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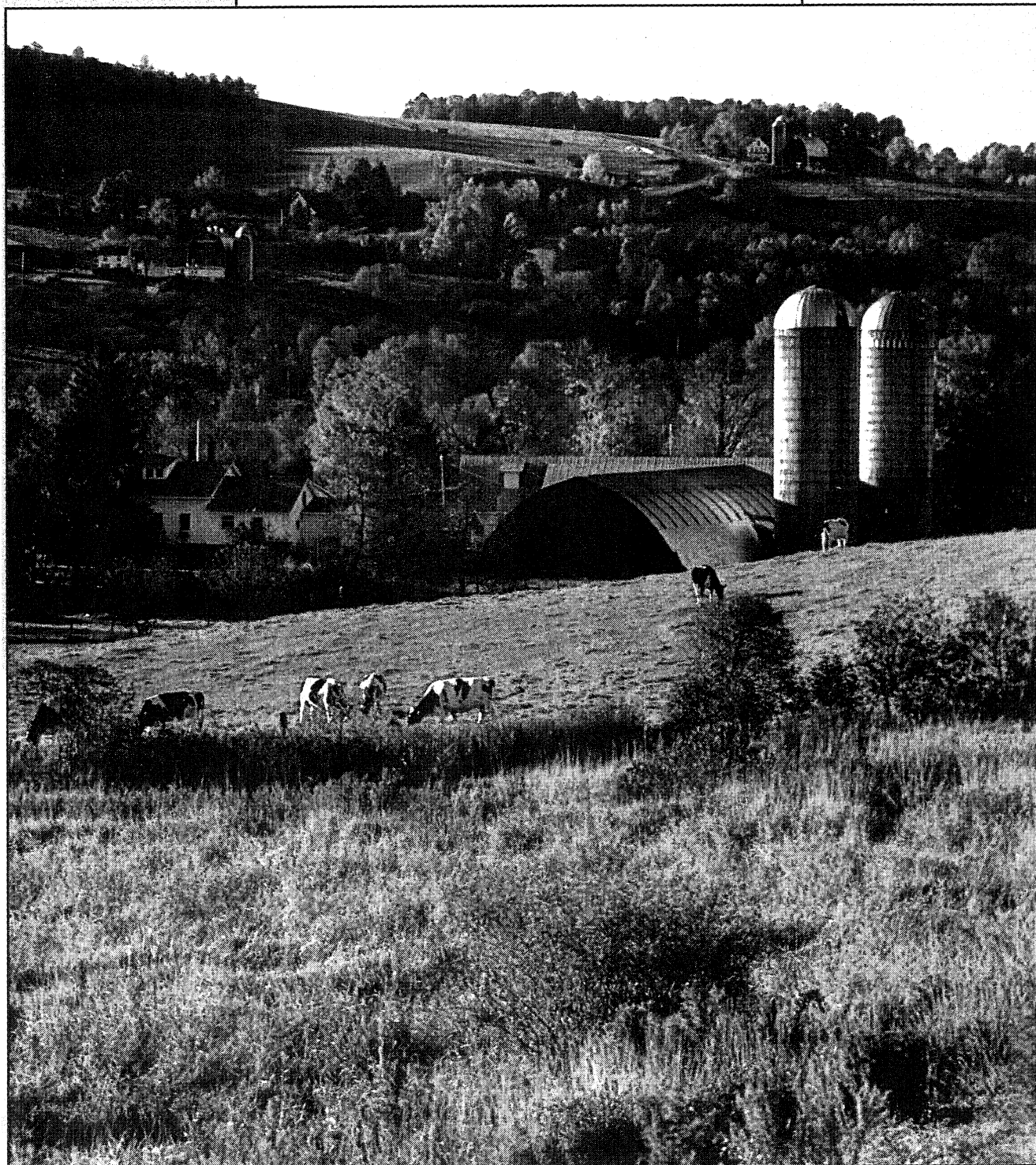
# Growing Carbon:

## A New Crop That Helps Agricultural Producers and the Climate Too



# SMALL SCALE SMALL FIELD CONSERVATION

*Simple practices and concepts to help you solve natural resource  
problems with a small investment of time and money*



United States Department of Agriculture

 **NRCS** Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service  
East Region





Roger Hill

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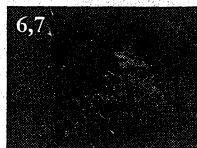
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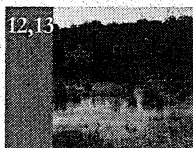
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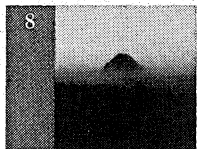
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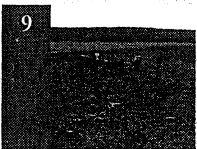
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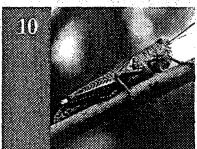
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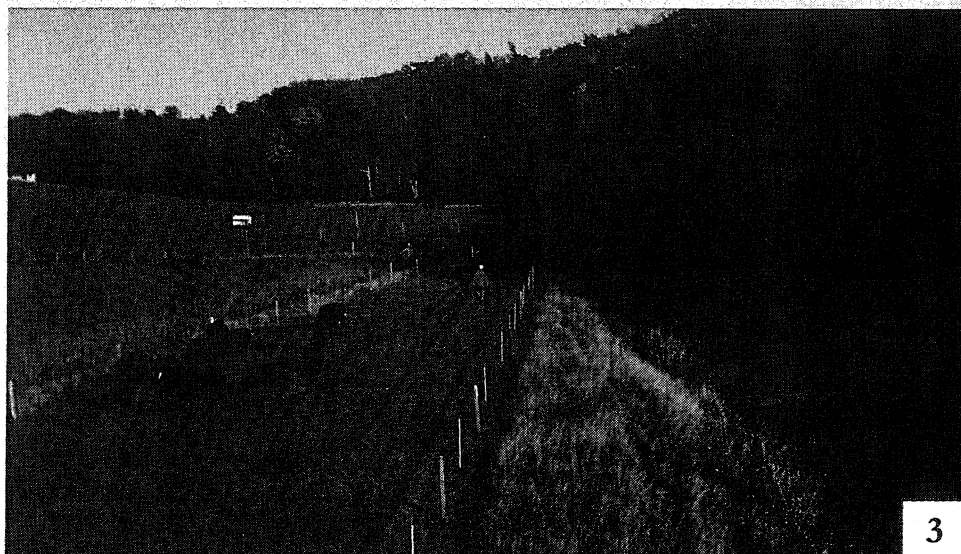
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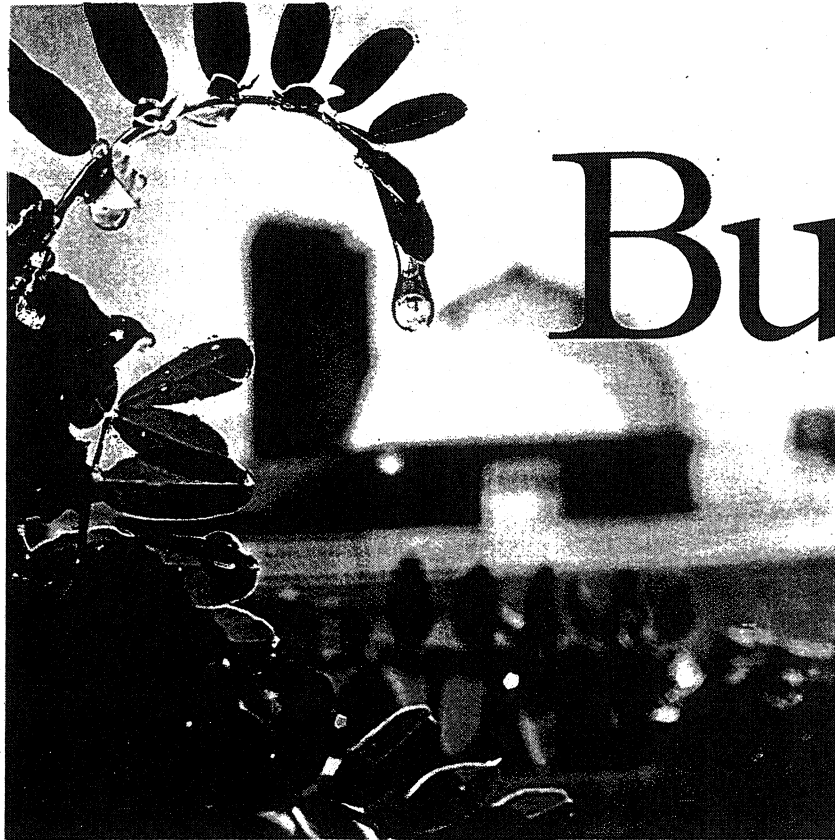
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# Buffers

## — Common Sense Conservation

*Financial incentives make them even more attractive.*

■ *By Monte Sesker, National Issues Editor*

**B**uffers belong in conservation. The permanent strips of vegetation work for you, they work for your neighbors, they work for your state, your nation.

Buffers protect soil and water. And they make economic sense.

More than 100,000 farmers and ranchers are convinced. Collectively, they have established nearly 612,000 miles of buffers stretching from California to Maine, Washington to Florida, Minnesota to Texas and every state in between.

Ask Paul Hendrickson, Garfield, Wash. He swapped cows for trees. His buffer project covers 250 acres and protects a stream. Or, how about Gene Barto of Tiffin, Ohio. He seeded 40 acres of filter-strips and waterways to help clean up Lake Erie. John Long, Newberry, S.C., has miles of contour buffers to protect fragile Piedmont soils. Trout swim in a temperate stream protected by a riparian buffer zone on Bernie Beatty's New Jersey dairy farm. It has been the only cool spot during one of the worst summer droughts ever.

Kentucky farmer and precision farming consultant Rick Murdock argues that buffers also boost your bottom line. Buffer zones are often seeded on low-producing areas, so inputs are diverted to better soils. Yield averages often increase because of it. He has records to prove you can save \$80 an acre, or more, by not farming along blue-line streams.

(FSA), local soil and water conservation districts, the Cooperative Extension Service, state conservation offices, agribusinesses and others have joined the cause.

"Common sense conservation" is the theme of the vigorous promotional effort. You'll hear it referred to as the "National Conservation Buffer Initiative."

**"WHEN COMBINED WITH CONSERVATION TILLAGE AND NUTRIENT AND PEST MANAGEMENT, BUFFERS CAN ALL BUT ELIMINATE SERIOUS WATER POLLUTION AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS FROM FARMS."**

—Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman

Buffers do not represent new technology. Their benefits have been known for years. The 1996 Farm Bill revived the buffer concept and continues to provide the enticement to establish them. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is spearheading a drive to get more buffers in place. The Farm Service Agency

The goal is to install two million miles of buffer strips by 2002. The effort focuses on encouraging enrollment of land in government conservation programs, as well as linking it to many other public and private campaigns. A number of financial incentives are available to make the program attractive

*Continued on next page*

## The paperwork is painless

Like any government program, making application to participate in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program signup takes some paperwork. Don't let that worry you. It takes only two or three visits to your local office and an hour and a half of time or less to join a conservation program that benefits you 10 to 15 years.

Chester Worden, veteran conservation technician in Tama County, Iowa, has helped enroll countless acres. He says signup should work pretty much the same no matter what region of the country you're in. Naturally, more complex applications may take a little more time to complete while some simpler contracts will take much less.

Worden offers this brief overview of what to expect.

- You decide to visit your local Farm Service Agency to learn more about the opportunities. In just a few minutes, a staff person can explain the program and answer specific questions. It takes about 10 minutes to fill out the actual application and indicate on a field map the area you want to offer.

- Your application is given to an NRCS technician who examines the practice and encourages you to let them draw up a whole farm plan.

- If needed, a technician will visit your farm or ranch to offer on-site suggestions. Once the conservation plan is prepared, the technician will be available to walk you through the details. A more complicated enrollment may require another office visit. The technician will explain such things as procedures to install the practice, number of acres involved, the cost-share allowance, the annual rental payment and other pertinent information. Expect it to take 30 minutes or less. In simpler cases, the plan may simply be mailed directly to the applicant, who gives final approval, signs and returns the CRP plan to FSA.

economically.

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman is a prime promoter. "Properly installed and maintained buffers can help keep pesticides, sediments and nutrients from reaching waterways," he says. "When combined with conservation tillage and nutrient and pest management, buffers can all but eliminate serious water pollution and related environmental problems from farms."

There are a host of basic benefits. They add beauty to the countryside and visually showcase your commitment to protecting the land for future farmers. Vegetation provides habitat for nesting birds and many species of wildlife.

Because the strips act as barriers and filters to help control surface runoff, fish and aquatic life in and around ponds, streams and rivers are protected from potential pollutants.

The flexibility of where conservation buffers fit make them especially useful for farmers and ranchers all

across the nation. They can be installed along the edge of a field or within a field, next to a stream or around a pond. They work almost anywhere fragile lands and water need protection. To help you evaluate how buffers might benefit your land, here is a brief description of the most popular types and their primary purpose.

### CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS

These are typically strips of perennial vegetation alternated with wide cultivated strips farmed on the contour. Primary purpose is to reduce sheet and rill erosion, thereby reducing the movement of sediment, nutrients and pesticides. They provide excellent places for nesting and wildlife cover.

### FILTER STRIPS

Strips of grass or other permanent vegetation are used to intercept or trap sediment, organic pesticides, nutrients and other contaminants before they can reach a body of water.

### RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFERS

An area of trees and shrubs located adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. Used to intercept pollutants from both ground and surface water. Provides a number of benefits to wildlife and aquatic organisms. Protects streambanks and shorelines from erosion. Some species can be managed to provide timber.

### FIELD BORDERS

Strips of perennial vegetation planted at the edge of a field. They protect against runoff as well as provide a turn area or travel lane for farm equipment.

### WINDBREAK/SHELTERBELT

Single or multiple rows of trees or shrubs. Primary function is to protect farmsteads, livestock from strong winds and snow, as well as reduce wind erosion across open fields. They beautify the landscape and dampen noise.

### GRASSED WATERWAY

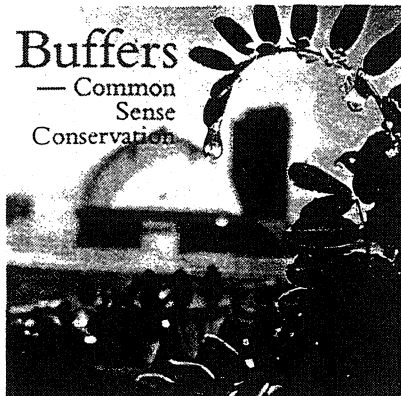
This can be a natural or constructed channel planted in permanent vegetation. Located in an area where runoff concentrates, its purpose is to slow the release of water to a non-erosive level. They are often combined with filter strips at the outlet. Working together, these buffers are an effective means of trapping potential sediment, nutrient and pesticide pollutants, while preventing gully erosion.

There are other practices which qualify for the program such as living snow fences, shallow water areas for wildlife, crosswind trap strips, streambank plantings and similar buffers. Your local NRCS and FSA offices have all the information.

Buffers work best when they are part of a systems approach to conservation. They are especially effective combined with conservation tillage, nutrient management programs and integrated pest management. In some situations, NRCS works with several individual landowners to develop a system of buffers and related practices. When combined, this system offers even more far-ranging regional benefits to all involved. ♦

## Buffers

— Common  
Sense  
Conservation



# Buffers work, research proves it

*Up to 90% of nitrate runoff may be trapped.*

■ By Monte Sesker, National Issues Editor

**T**here's a way you can beautify the landscape, attract wildlife, protect streams and rivers, reduce field erosion and get paid for it. You may even increase farm profits.

And there is plenty of solid research to prove it.

"Installing riparian buffer zones can be the most important management practice for control of non-point pollution problems in humid areas. They will work in many situations across the nation," says Wendell Gilliam, a North Carolina State University professor and soil scientist who has been studying the practice for 15 years.

His work indicates a riparian zone established properly will remove up to 90% of the unused nitrogen leaving your fields. Riparian buffers are the native grasses, trees, shrubs or other vegetation growing along streams. They remove nitrogen through a combination of denitrification and plant uptake.

Many farms across the southeast and the nation have natural riparian buffers which need to be restored, says Gilliam. The recommended combination of plants and size of the structure depends on the individual site. Typically, in a flat area where no erosion is occurring, he recommends planting a grass strip a minimum of 25 feet wide. Where erosion is a problem, it should be at least 50 feet wide.

In many situations across the southeast, the general consensus is that trees should be included in the mix. Tree roots are more effective in removing ground water nitrate pollutants.

Across the country to the far west, Chris Hoag shares enthusiasm for riparian buffers and wetland areas. He's

a USDA research scientist in Aberdeen, Idaho. "Buffers truly fit along stream banks to control erosion and help keep water clean," he says. "We've even been successful planting vegetation in rip-rap for even more protection.

"Farmers simply need to realize they don't need to plant right up to a stream's edge. That soil is generally lower producing and more fragile. Shrubs and trees are a better choice."

"Farmers across the west and northwest are starting to understand that buffers will make a difference," he adds. "It's a challenge, but we're encouraged."

In the Midwest, a team of Iowa State University scientists know what's happening in a well-designed buffer system.

"A properly installed buffer system can effectively trap 90% or more of sediment movement from farm fields," says Joe Coletti, associate forestry professor. "That figure would be on target

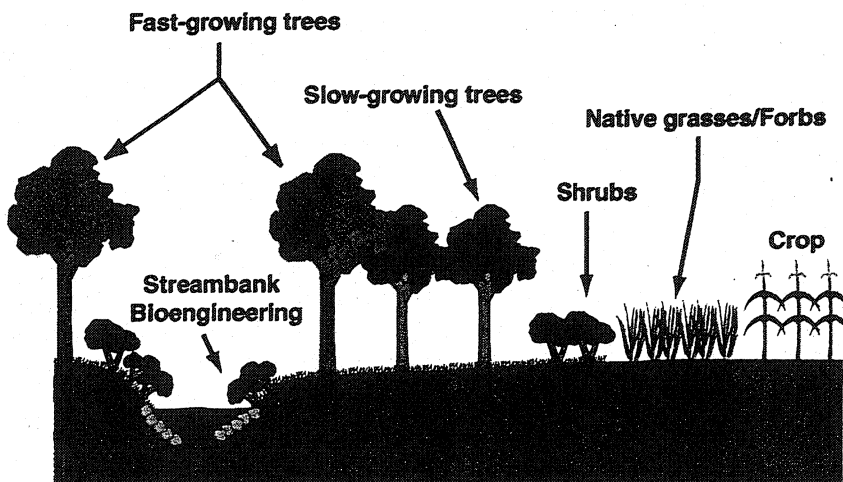
for most ag regions of the country."

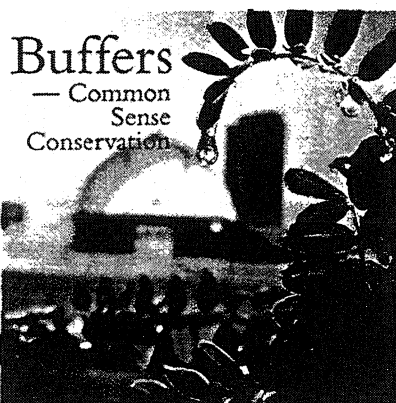
"While the overall impact may vary in other regions, there is plenty of research which shows buffers of various forms offer similar advantages in most other ag states," adds Richard Schultz, professor of forest ecology and watershed management at Iowa State.

ISU research shows a native grass strip just 10 feet wide captures 60% of the sediment. A 20-foot strip retains 80% of the sediment. Nitrate moving from field edge to stream edge through the buffer is reduced by more than 90%.

The cost to establish a riparian zone is relatively small, explains Coletti. Site preparation, planting and weed control runs about \$500 per acre. USDA's 50% cost-share assistance cuts that to \$250 an acre. Your first annual rental payment will almost cover the rest. Other private programs may help chop that cost even more. ♦

## Multi-Species Riparian Buffer System





# Farm the best, buffer the rest

*Here's how the initiative can work for you.*

■ *By Monte Sesker, National Issues Editor*

**O**kay, you're convinced. The Buffer Initiative does offer a common-sense approach to conservation. But you have some specific questions. You want to learn more about what financial incentives are available to get you started planting. The answers to your questions are as near as your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

There are several USDA programs that offer assistance in establishing and maintaining qualifying practices. The staff knows the rules inside and out. They'll point out how the continuous signup provision of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a great opportunity to put many of the practices mentioned into service. For instance, if the whole field isn't eligible for CRP, then consider establishing eligible buffers on the most fragile soils and farm the rest. It makes these practices economically attractive. There is no competitive bid process. If the land and practice requirements are met, your offer will be automatically accepted at the maximum rental for comparable land in your region.

The better the land, the bigger the payment. In Iowa, for example, the rent is based on the land's corn suitability rating. Poor land may bring about \$65 per acre, while good land could yield a payment of as much as \$180 per acre.

Annual rental payments are based on the relative productivity of the soil type and the average cash rent of comparable dry land cash rent in your county.

Extra incentives may be offered to landowners for installing certain practices. For example, a 20% incentive is

added to the annual rental rate for field windbreaks, grassed waterways, filter strips and riparian buffers. Annual rental payments are made by USDA directly to the landowner soon after Oct. 1 each year.

Up to 50% cash-share assistance is available from USDA to help establish permanent practices. It covers such measures as site preparation, temporary cover until the permanent vegetation is established, grading and shaping trees or shrubs, mulch, supplemental irrigation and fencing. The payments are made when the approved practices are completed and accepted. Contracts under the continuous signup are 10 to 15 years in length.

There are other federal programs that can help put buffers in place. These include USDA's Wildlife Incentives Program (WHIP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP).

Some state and local governments have programs to help with the cost. A number of national and state organizations such as the National Corn Growers Association, Pheasants Forever and the National Association of Conservation Districts offer assistance for certain projects.

The initiative also has support from private industry. David Stawick is president of the National Conservation Buffer Council (NCBC). The organization is dedicated to the promotion of buffers across the nation. "It's a way to show landowners that the private sector endorses the program and that these practices do mesh with profitable farming and responsible en-

vironmental stewardship," says Stawick.

From a practical standpoint USDA program incentives offer landowners the opportunity to get assistance installing conservation measures that may be mandated in the not too distant future.

"You owe it to yourself to learn more about buffers," he asserts. "You may be surprised at how much economic sense they make."

For more information, check their website at [www.buffercouncil.org](http://www.buffercouncil.org).

Tom Hoogheem isn't bashful about buffers. "Thank you, thank you, one and all who have heard the story and acted," is his rapid-fire reaction. "And shame on you if you haven't. Please take the time to read these stories. Call your local NRCS office, talk to other farmers. Your FSA staff or NRCS technician has plenty of names of enthusiastic participants who will be happy to visit."

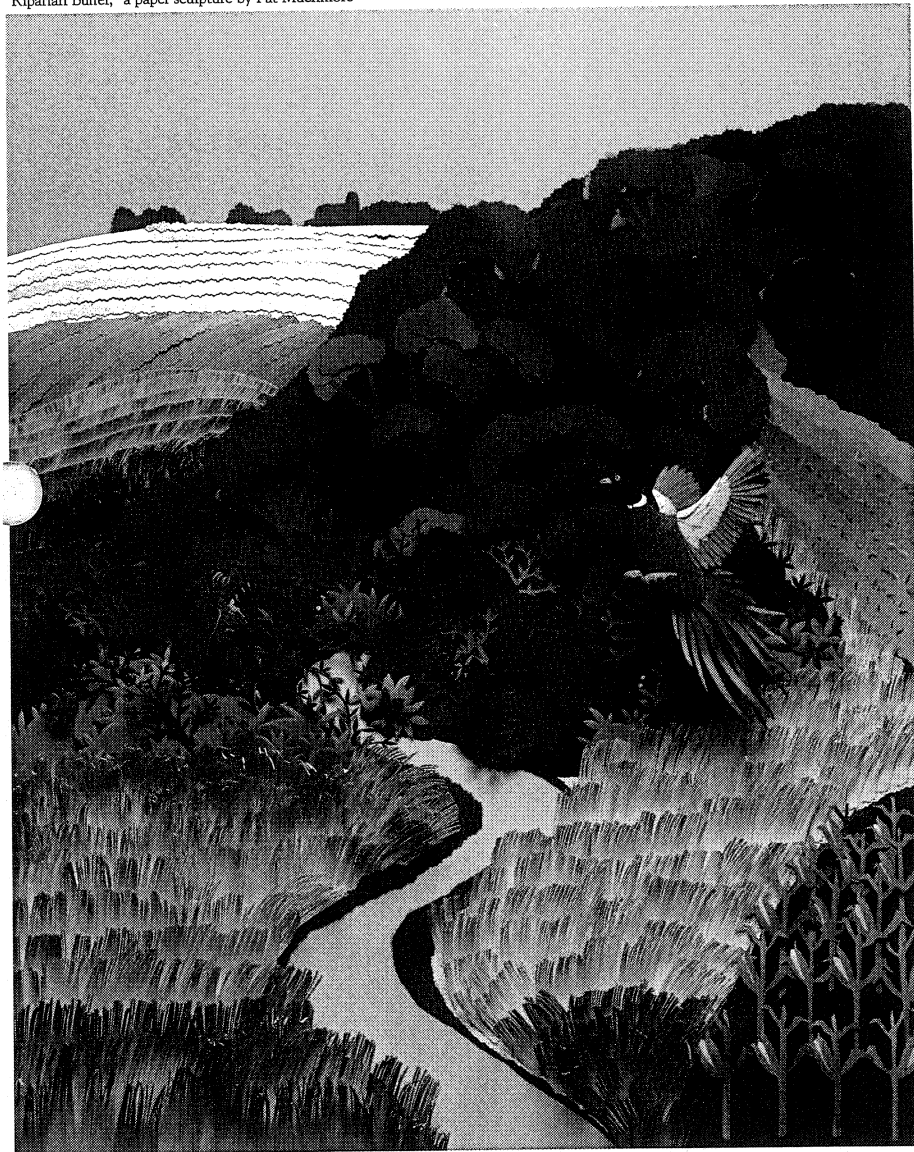
Hoogheem is director of environmental operations for Monsanto Co., St. Louis, Mo., and also serves as council vice president. An avid conservationist, experienced in the benefits buffers provide, he also had a hand in founding the buffer initiative program two years ago.

"It's a concept that makes sense," he says. "I'm out there belly to belly with ag dealers and farmers promoting the program. I tell them the solution to water pollution is to change practices."

"If you spray enough Pepsi on bare ground, it's going to wind up in someone's water. Buffers, along with other conservation management practices, will help keep you farming without more and more rules and regulations and you get paid for it." ♦



"Riparian Buffer," a paper sculpture by Pat Muchmore

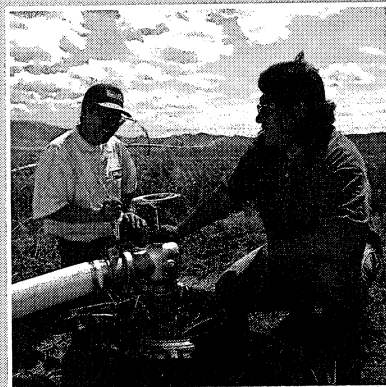
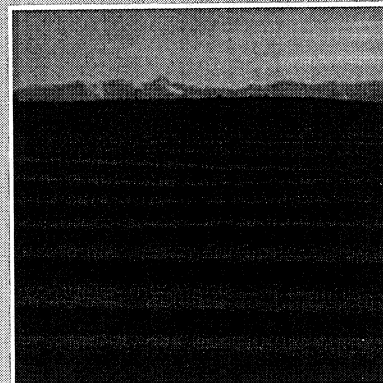
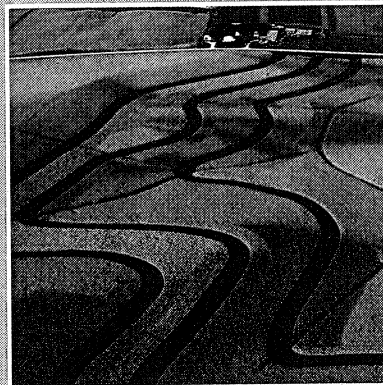
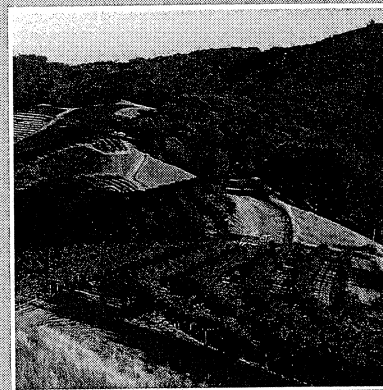
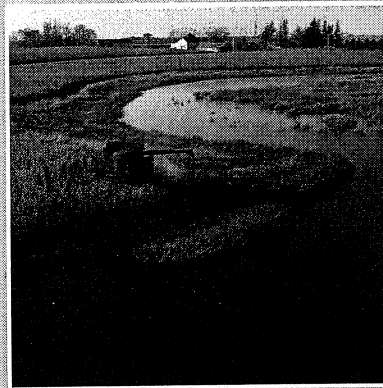


**CONSERVATION BUFFERS WORK...  
ECONOMICALLY AND  
ENVIRONMENTALLY**



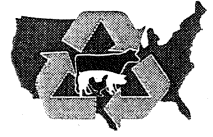
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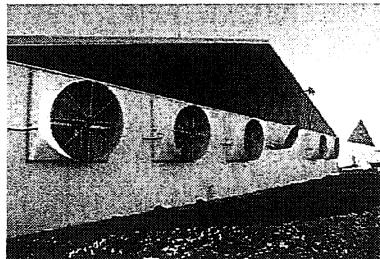
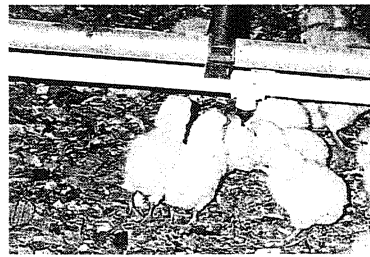
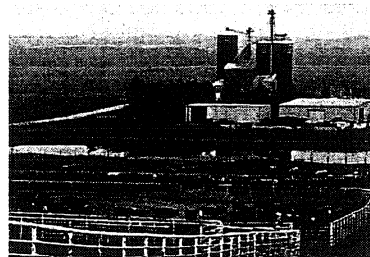
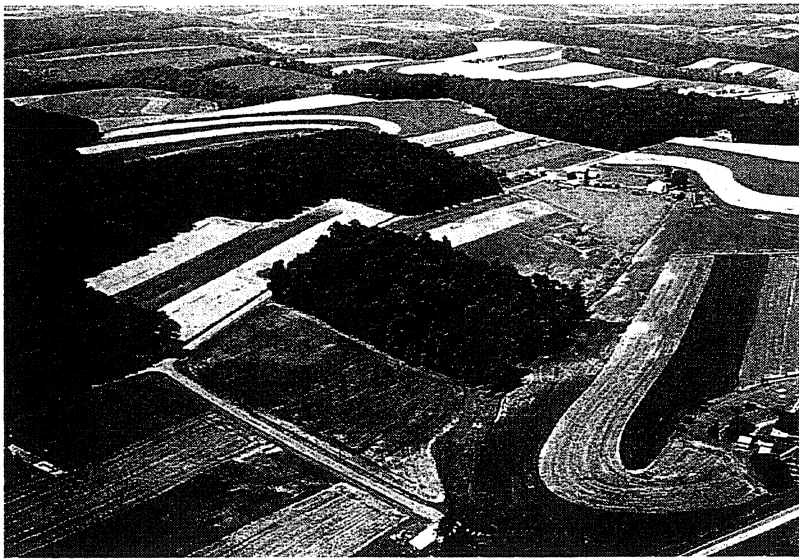
# *Signatures* ON THE land

# Lesson 1



## Principles of Environmental Stewardship

By Rick Koelsch, University of Nebraska





# Lesson 1

## Principles of Environmental Stewardship

By Rick Koelsch, University of Nebraska

### Intended Outcomes

The participants will

- Recognize key principles of environmental stewardship.
- Understand key environmental issues facing the livestock and poultry industry.
- Review those environmental and regulatory issues that are of local interest.

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- Why are we here? 5

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### Activities

The participants will complete

- An assessment of the environmental stewardship principles that they have implemented with their own livestock/poultry operation.
- A prioritization of individual environmental issues within the local community.
- A review of applicable regulations.

### PROJECT STATEMENT

This educational program, Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship, consists of lessons arranged into the following six modules:

- Introduction
- Animal Dietary Strategies
- Manure Storage and Treatment
- Land Application and Nutrient Management
- Outdoor Air Quality
- Related Issues

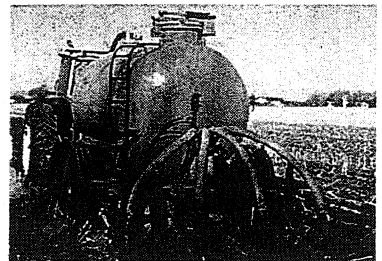
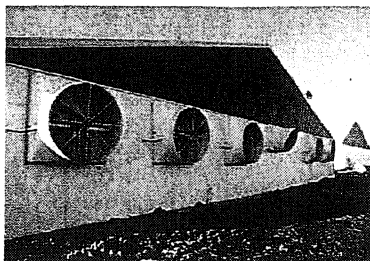
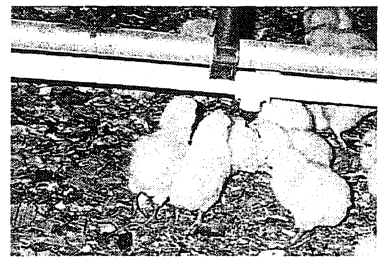
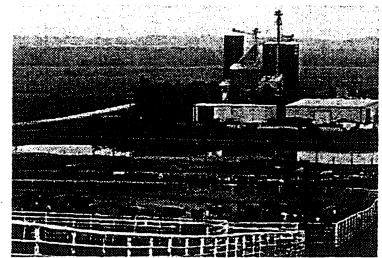
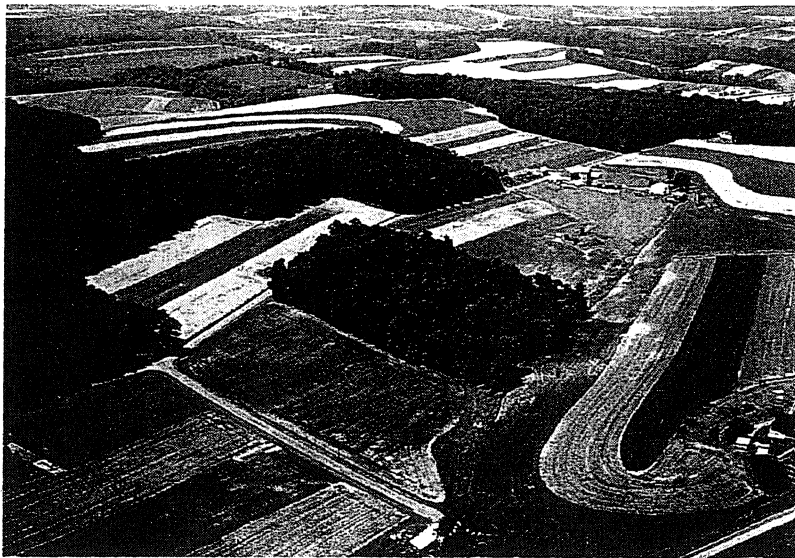
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# Lesson 33



## Selecting Land Application Sites

By Ron Sheffield, North Carolina State University,  
and Pat Murphy, Kansas State University





# Lesson 33

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## Selecting Land Application Sites

By Ron Sheffield, North Carolina State University, and Pat Murphy,  
Kansas State University

### Intended Outcomes

The participants will

- Identify factors to select appropriate sites.
- Identify sources of site information.
- Evaluate environmental concerns of application sites.

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### Activities

#### PROJECT STATEMENT

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- Related Issues

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highlighted in green are  
linked to corresponding text.



# WORKING LANDSCAPES IN THE MIDWEST:

## *Creating Sustainable Futures for Agriculture, Forestry & Communities*

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### Conference Proceedings



November 8 - 9, 2001  
Lake Lawn Resort  
Delavan, Wisconsin

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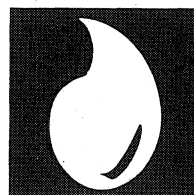
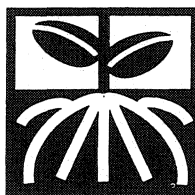
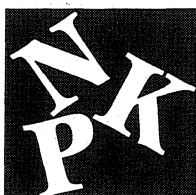
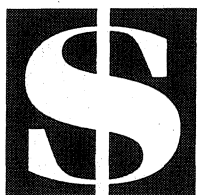
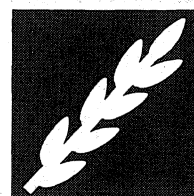
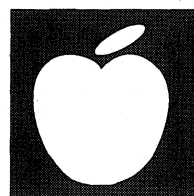
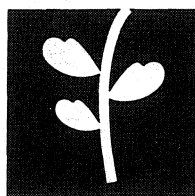
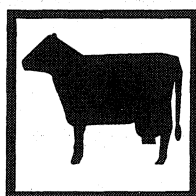
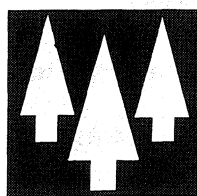
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# SOURCE BOOK OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

FOR EDUCATORS, PRODUCERS AND  
OTHER AGRICULTURAL PROFESSIONALS

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*A guide to books, newsletters, conference  
proceedings, bulletins, videos and more*



A publication of the Sustainable  
Agriculture Network with funding by the  
Sustainable Agriculture Research and  
Education program of USDA-CSREES



## How to Use the *Source Book of Sustainable Agriculture*

Welcome to this comprehensive guide to sustainable agriculture information materials. The *Source Book*, a compendium of books, newsletters, conference proceedings, bulletins, videos, reports and web sites offers a wealth of information for educators, producers and other farm and ranch professionals interested in agricultural conservation issues.

The book features 559 entries organized alphabetically by state, U.S. territory and foreign country. For easy reference, states are abbreviated according to postal codes, which are printed in the upper right corner of each odd-numbered page.

Each entry is listed beneath a publishing entity organized alphabetically within each state. Entries include: title, type of informational product, author, abstract,

date published, cost, whether it is available in quantities or can be freely duplicated and whom to contact to order or receive more information.

Most *Source Book* entries are followed by one or more icons that graphically depict the entry topics. See the complete icon list below.

The *Source Book* features user-friendly indexes organized by subject, organization, author and videos. Two appendices list sustainable agriculture centers at universities and sustainable agriculture web sites nationwide.

SAN would like to hear from you. See page 135 to update or add an entry, either by mail or on the World Wide Web. Please fill out and send the survey on page 136 to help SAN in future book planning.

***Look for these icons throughout the book as a quick reference to entry subject matter.***



**Agroforestry**



**Animal Production**



**Cover Crops**



**Horticulture**



**Grain Production**



**Marketing and Farm Profitability**



**Nutrient Management**



**Soil Quality and Conservation**



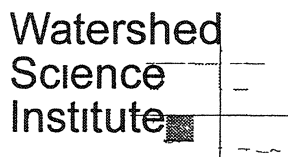
**Education and Networking**



**Water Quality and Conservation**



NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
CONSERVATION  
SERVICE



WSSI Sustainability Technical Note 1

October 1997

## Sustainable Agriculture

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Sheep grazing on groundcover in an orchard showing multiple use of land for fruit and animal production

### Why Sustainable Agriculture?

Over the past decade the term sustainable agriculture has been defined in a variety of ways. This technical note clarifies what sustainable agriculture signifies for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A few basic concepts are presented to help the reader gain a better understanding of the topic, related philosophies and practices. This is the first in a series of technical notes on sustainable agriculture produced by the NRCS Watershed Science Institute. In later technical notes some basic procedures involved in converting to more diversified farming operations will be described.

For more information contact Stefanie Aschmann, Agroecologist, NRCS Watershed Science Institute  
c/o NAC, UNL East Campus, Lincoln, NE 68583-0822  
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## DEFINITION

In the 1996 Farm Bill sustainable agriculture is defined as follows

an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site specific application that will over the long term

- (A) satisfy human food and fiber needs
- (B) enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends
- (C) make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on farm resources and integrate where appropriate natural biological cycles and controls
- (D) sustain the economic viability of farm operations and
- (E) enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole (16 U S C Sec 3103(17))

The NRCS General Manual defines sustainable agriculture as

a way of practicing agriculture which seeks to optimize skills and technology to achieve long term stability of the agricultural enterprise environmental protection and consumer safety It is achieved through management strategies which help the producer select hybrids and varieties soil conserving cultural practices soil fertility programs and pest management programs The goal of sustainable agriculture is to minimize adverse impacts to the immediate and off farm environments while providing a sustained level of production and profit Sound resource conservation is an integral part of the means to achieve sustainable agriculture (180 GM Part 407)

The American Society of Agronomy defines it as agriculture

that over the long term, enhances environmental quality and the resource base on which agriculture depends provides for basic human food and fiber needs is economically viable and enhances environmental quality and the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole (Schaller 1990)

A fourth definition is

Sustainable agriculture is a philosophy based on human goals and on understanding the long term impact of our activities on the environment and on other species Use of this philosophy guides our application of prior experience and the latest scientific advances to create integrated resource conserving equitable farming systems These systems reduce environmental degradation maintain agricultural productivity promote economic viability in both the short and long term and maintain stable rural communities and quality of life (Francis & Youngberg 1989)

These definitions while not identical have major components in common Sustainable agriculture under all four definitions maintains

- PRODUCTIVITY
- ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION
- SOCIOECONOMIC VIABILITY

## Prime Farmland

*Stewardship of prime farmlands is a fundamental component of sustainable agriculture Prime farmlands are highly productive versatile or otherwise unique and are of strategic importance to the nation as a whole as well as to individual regions Although total cropland in the United States has stayed nearly constant since 1945 at 460 million acres the loss of farmland to urban and nonfarm uses can be a major local or state issue Much of the best farmland is adjacent to major metropolitan areas and is being converted to nonagricultural uses*

President's Council on Sustainable Development 1996

## Resource Efficiency

Energy is a critical resource for agriculture yet it is not always considered in conservation planning. Sustainable agriculture attempts to minimize the use of non-renewable energy resources while increasing reliance on renewable energy resources.

To understand the role of energy in sustainable agricultural systems, consider the energy cycle of a farm compared with that of a natural ecosystem (Figure 2). The primary source of energy in both natural and agricultural ecosystems is the sun. Solar energy is converted by green plants to biochemical energy through the process of photosynthesis. This biochemical energy is then transferred to other organisms in the ecosystem through metabolism. At each level of transfer, energy is lost in the form of heat. In agricultural systems, solar energy inputs are subsidized by the addition of either 'direct' energy inputs such as labor (animal and/or human), fossil fuels, and electricity used to perform farm work, or 'indirect' energy inputs such as fertilizers, irrigation water, herbicides, pesticides, seeds, and farm equipment. Energy is required to produce these indirect inputs. Energy 'losses' also occur as soil, water, and nutrients leave the system through erosion, runoff, leaching, and denitrification. In natural systems, these losses may be relatively minor. In agricultural systems, they may be substantial. One goal of sustainable agriculture is to economize on the energy subsidies to the agricultural system, utilizing the natural ecosystem as a model. To achieve this goal, farmers must make efficient use of non-renewable resources, use on-farm resources rather than purchased inputs when possible, and integrate natural biological cycles and controls where appropriate.

All of these components must coincide for agriculture to be sustainable. If a system is not ecologically sustainable, it cannot be productive or economical in the long run. Conversely, if a system is not productive and profitable over the long run, it cannot be sustained economically, no matter how ecologically functional (Neher, 1992). Sustainable agriculture also implies social and economic interactions among the producer, the community, and society as a whole.

## PRODUCTIVITY

Sustainable agriculture produces safe, marketable food and fiber that is sufficient to supply the needs of the marketplace. Products of sustainable agriculture do not contain harmful residues nor exhibit pest damage that would significantly reduce market value (Fig. 1).

For society to be sustainable, its agriculture must be productive. It is a misconception that sustainable agriculture is less productive than conventional agriculture. It may be more productive, especially in the long term.



Figure 1 Sustainable agriculture produces marketable food that brings profit to the farmer

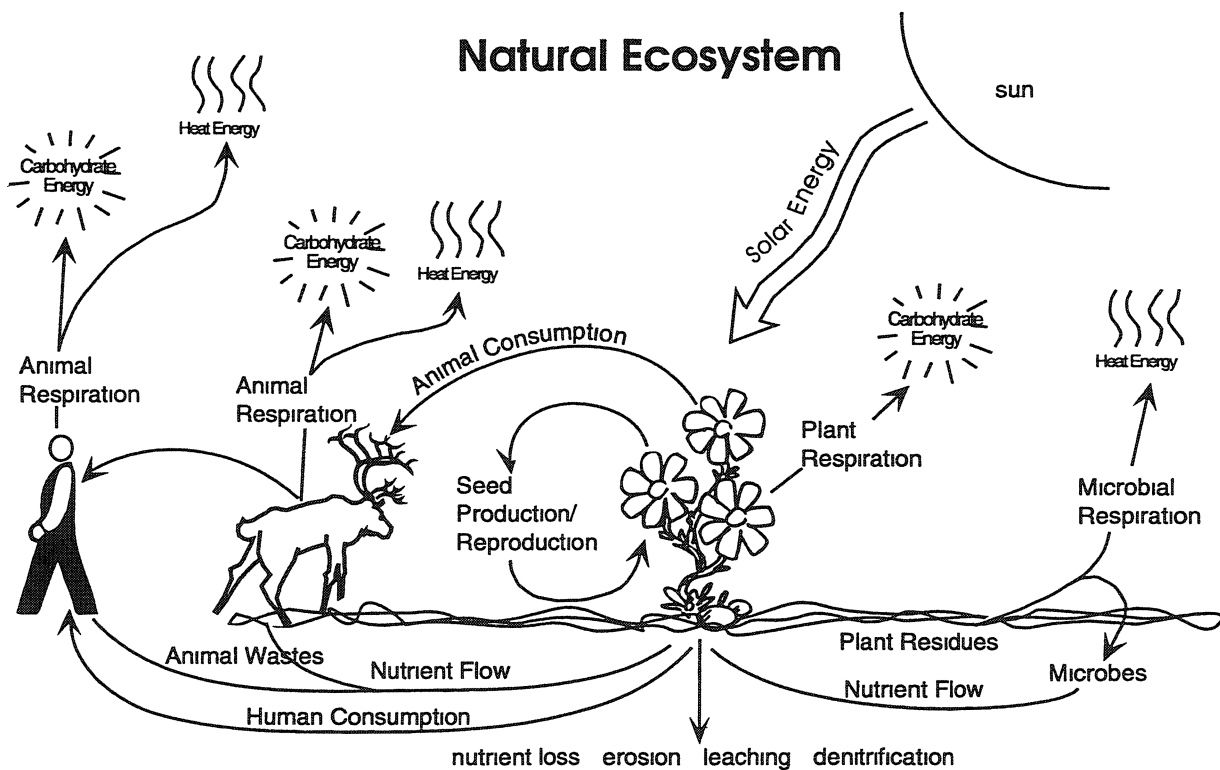
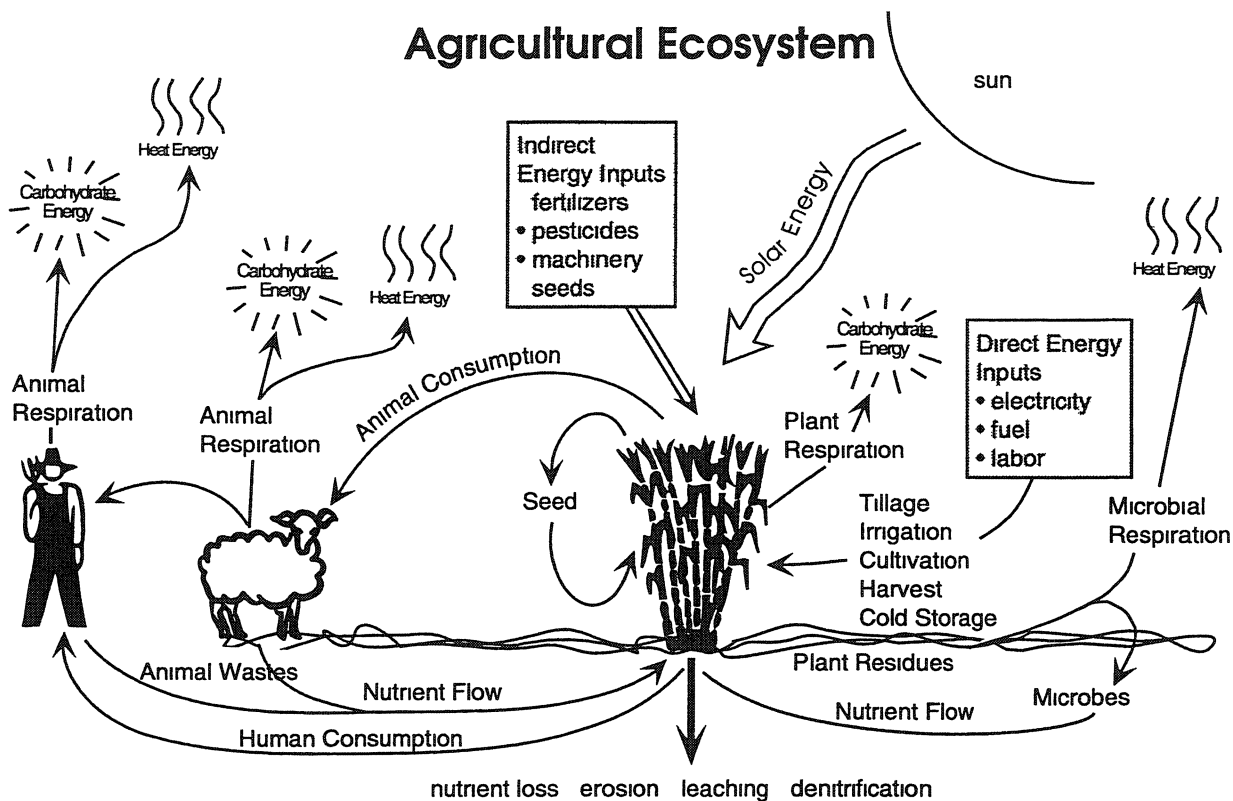
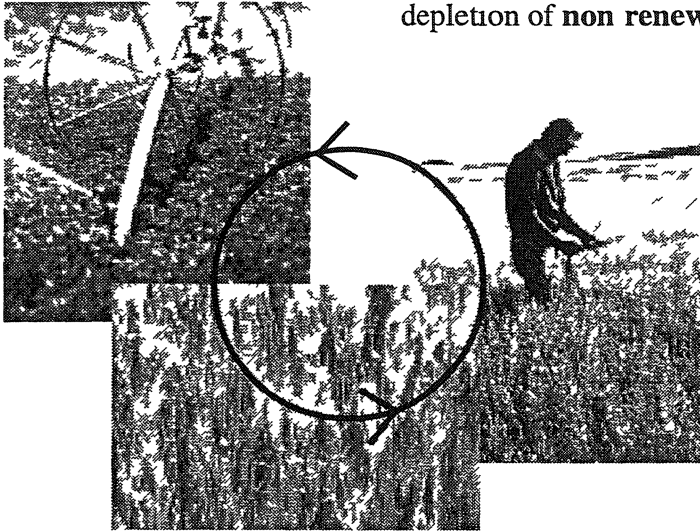


Figure 2 Energy Flows in Agricultural and Natural Ecosystems

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION

Sustainable agriculture maintains and protects soil water air plants animals and cultural resources It optimizes use of resources produced on the farm or within the local community and it strives to minimize the depletion of **non renewable energy resources** and optimize effective use of **renewable energy resources**



Sustainable agriculture minimizes harmful effects of agricultural systems on the local environment including the physical and biological resources surrounding the agricultural systems as well as the landscape and more distant potential receiving water bodies This is often accomplished by minimizing the unintentional loss of indirect energy inputs and other farm resources off the farm Many NRCS conservation practices such as Nutrient Management Pest Management and Conservation Crop Rotation (Figure 3) are designed to do exactly this

Figure 3 Rotating crops  
minimizes the loss of soil and  
nutrients

## SOCIOECONOMIC VIABILITY

Sustainable agricultural systems are practical and economically viable approaches Such systems involve reasonable risk and profit to the owners/operators based on the resources they have available Sustainable agricultural systems are often more **diverse** than conventional agricultural systems Diversity at first glance may seem to reduce efficiency and therefore profit however diversity in agricultural ecosystems as in natural ecosystems often reduces risk caused by external disturbance Long term profit can be stabilized and may be comparable to or higher than that of conventional agricultural systems Sustainable agricultural systems also maintain economic viability of local communities and watersheds exchanging dollars within a community thus promoting the local economy and adding value to products (Figure 4)

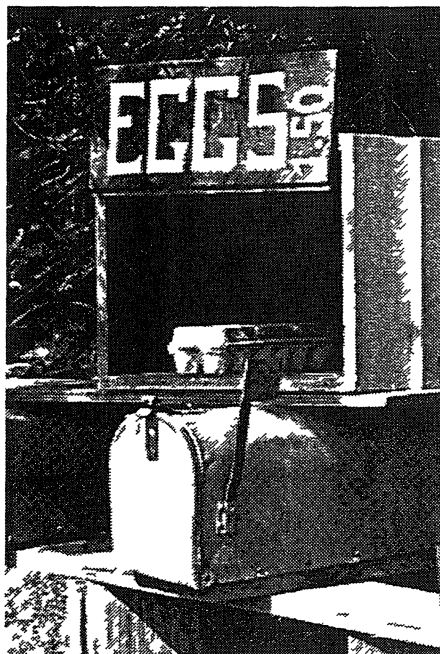


Figure 4 Sustainable  
farms often sell their  
products locally

Sustainable agriculture reflects local social values. A system that supports local people not only sustains the community but also promotes a vital support system and livable environment both critical to quality of life.

### SUSTAINABLE CHARACTERISTICS

Sustainable agricultural systems come in many sizes, shapes and colors. However, a number of characteristics seem to be common to many systems. Research Extension, North Dakota State University (Gardner 1995) suggests four identifying characteristics of sustainable farms: use of ecological niches, movable fences and livestock, crop diversity, and generally less capital intensive operations.

Gardner defines a niche as a distinctive habitat created by the land's slope, how much solar energy it receives, its relation to surface water and ground water, exposure to wind, or vegetation. To the farmer, a niche is an area where crops grow and yield differently. Each niche requires management that is unique. Sustainable farmers recognize diversity of place and manage their farms accordingly. In Montana, some farmers manage soils rather than fields. Others manage slopes and drainage ways. Still others create their own niches with selective plantings.

Sustainable systems often integrate livestock and cropping systems. With controlled grazing, animals are rotated often to utilize their impact on the land in a positive cyclical manner. Temporary movable fencing is an economical means of confining animals for rotational grazing and is often a visual indication of a sustainable agricultural system.

Sustainable farms tend to conserve non-renewable energy. They use on-farm resources rather than purchased inputs.

### Diversity

Diversity is defined as differences. In agricultural ecosystems, these differences may be biological, social, or economic and may be measured at different scales, from microbial to field, farm, landscape, regional, and global (Olson & Francis 1995). Agricultural diversity may include different crops, types of livestock, and presence or absence of hedgerows and/or riparian areas. Diversity measures must also consider farm and field sizes, demography, and ethnic backgrounds of farming populations, ownership patterns, and other sources of variation within the agricultural setting. It should be apparent that measuring agricultural diversity is complex, and further, is compounded when one considers the hierarchy of scales within which diversity can be measured.

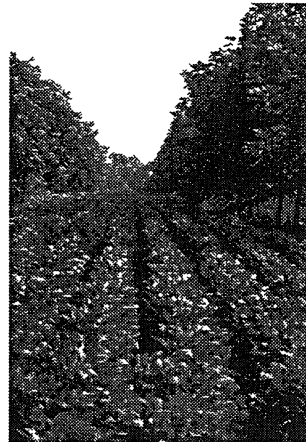


Figure 5 Alley cropping, a form of strip cropping, increases crop species diversity.

**Ecological Diversity** is the variety of life and its processes (including living organisms), the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. Different crop species and varieties, diverse livestock, and natural fauna, and functional interactions among them can all contribute to biological diversity (Figure 5). Examples include morphologically different crop species (e.g., shallow vs. deep rooted, tall vs. short).



### Diversity continued

woody vs herbaceous early maturing vs late maturing) and their spatial and temporal distribution. Field designs such as strip cropping and intercropping increase diversity at the field and farm scale. At the landscape level, biological diversity is often measured by the number of different landscape elements (patches) present. The spatial arrangement of these patches and physiographic features such as drainage patterns, ridges, woody corridors, and habitat edges dictate the functional diversity of the landscape.

**Economic diversity** can also be measured at different scales. At the farm scale, it may be described by the number of different products on the farm, while at larger scales, farms can be categorized in terms of economic characteristics such as net income class, or by categories of enterprises. Economic relationships within a region that demonstrate more linkages and interactions, such as farmers using multiple suppliers and markets (Figure 6), are more functionally diverse than economic relationships such as contract farming in which the producer deals only with one supplier and buyer.

**Social diversity** is often described in terms of different ethnic groups, gender, education, age class, experience, and other factors (Flora et al. 1992), but functional social diversity depends on the interaction among the different groups. For example, a community whose different social groups interact through trade, shared community service, and shared experience is more functionally diverse than a community in which racial, economic, or social segregation prevent these interactions (Figure 7).

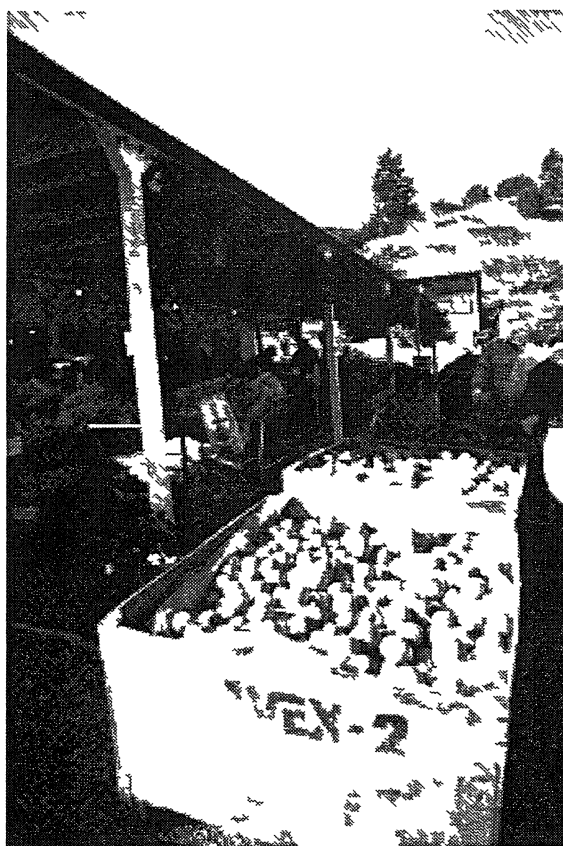


Figure 6 Farmer's market with a diversity of products for sale



Figure 7 Community farmer

when possible and integrate biological cycles and controls where appropriate. In many places crop diversity is a critical element in sustainable farming. Alternating crops with different growth habits, nutrient requirements, and growing periods can utilize moisture and nutrients from different depths in the soil profile, break harmful pest and disease cycles, and harbor beneficial insects. Maximum utilization of resources is ensured while economically harmful pest populations are avoided. In some parts of the country this diversity is more important than in others, but in general crop diversity is an important key to sustainability.

Sustainable farms tend to use less imported energy and be less capital intensive but more intensively managed than conventional farms. Sustainable farms are carefully designed to make optimal use of renewable resources with a minimal impact on the environment.

### Diversity continued

How is diversity related to sustainability? At the farm level, diversity of farm enterprises generally promotes stability if the farm enterprises are complementary. A diversified crop/livestock production system that recycles nutrients on the farm and adds value to crops by marketing them as animal products may be more stable than a farm that is tied to external sources for energy, agrichemicals, and debt. Long crop rotations that include only nutrient mining crops may not necessarily be stable.

Interactions between farms and the local community are necessary to promote stability of the next level. Communities in which goods and capital to support farm enterprises are internally exchanged are more stable than those dependent on outside suppliers of finances and goods. Community stability is increased by community control of local resources, diversification within the community, and maximum reliance on local production and markets. Interactions among communities are necessary to promote regional stability (Olson et al. 1995).



Figure 8 Irregularly shaped crop strips follow the natural contours of the land

*The layout of sustainable agricultural systems is visibly different from conventional systems in that fields are not necessarily rectangular. Rather, their shape reflects the niches they represent (Figure 8).*

## SUMMARY

Sustainable agriculture has been defined in many ways but most definitions contain three common components productivity environmental quality and ecological function and socioeconomic viability Sustainable agriculture is profitable It makes efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on farm resources and supports local communities Energy conservation and diversity are two concepts often associated with sustainable agriculture

The Natural Resources Conservation Service mission is to provide leadership and administer programs to help people conserve improve and sustain our natural resources and environment Sustainable agriculture is an important aspect of this mission

## CASE STUDIES

Case studies provide insights into how sustainable agriculture can work in the real world Innovative farmers often develop new approaches to solving common problems Case studies of these problems and solutions provide a means for others to see how innovative approaches can actually function in a farming system In examining case studies it is important to remember that each situation is unique so that what works on one farm may or may not be a viable alternative for another Still case studies can help broaden the perspective of profitable alternatives and help focus future research (National Research Council 1989)

Summarized here are four different alternative farming systems in which the farmers are striving toward sustainability (Figure 9) The farms vary in size from 7 acres to over 1 000 acres They are located on opposite ends of the country the crops grown are

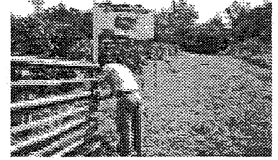
different and the farmers resources are different They have at least two things in common though a desire to protect the resources on which they depend while maintaining productivity and a willingness to try methods previously untested to achieve their goals More detailed case study descriptions are provided as inserts



Figure 9 Sustainable Agriculture Case Studies (clockwise from top left Mother Goose Farms Hawaii Ray Eck Farms California Lamar Black Georgia Kalin Farms Nebraska )

### Summary of Case Study 1: Mother Goose Farms

Mother Goose Farms is a small, organic coffee farm in South Kona, Hawaii. The owners, John and Vicki Smith have successfully eliminated herbicide and insecticide inputs by using geese as biological control agents. The geese also help cycle nutrients in the orchard. The Smiths are experimenting with alley cropping of the tropical legume, gliricidia, as a means of providing added protection and nutrients for the coffee plants. They have cornered a niche market for their organic coffee, which they process on site and sell locally, thereby eliminating energy costs associated with transportation. Mother Goose Farms is small but thriving.



### Summary of Case Study 2: Ray Eck Farms

Ray Eck grows organic almonds in Merced County, California and uses natural biological interactions to control insects and weeds. He cultivates a cover crop under almonds as part of this agricultural ecosystem. It provides habitat for beneficial insects and wildlife, controls undesirable plants, cycles water and nutrients, and improves soil quality. Ray carefully monitors the moisture and nutrient status of crops and maintains them at an optimal level. He shares his knowledge of biological interactions with other farmers through the BIOS (Biologically Integrated Orchard Systems) program, designed to help fruit and nut growers reduce chemical inputs while maintaining profitability.



### Summary of Case Study 3: Lamar Black

Lamar Black grows a variety of row crops on 1,000 acres in east central Georgia. He uses strip-till for all of his crops. This minimum tillage system reduces erosion, improves soil quality, reduces fuel costs, and improves wildlife habitat. Lamar is frugal with inputs such as irrigation water, fertilizers and pesticides, applying only when needed and only as much as needed. He plants pest-resistant crop varieties and uses winter cover crops for erosion control and improved soil fertility. He belongs to a cotton cooperative which helps him market that crop, but he markets other crops himself. The variety of crops he plants helps him weather fluctuating crop prices and maintain a steady cash flow. Lamar's strong stewardship ethic transcends ownership, since he does not own the land he farms.



### Summary of Case Study 4: Kalin Farms

Ed and Dorothy Kalin run a cow/calf operation on 1,160 acres of land in southeast Nebraska. Erosion is a major concern. Three quarters of the farm is in permanent pasture. The Kalins contour till the remaining cropland. The farm contains 8-10 miles of terraces, 2 miles of grassed waterways and 12 farm ponds that are or will soon be fenced. In addition, the farmstead and livestock wintering areas are protected by mature shelterbelts. The Kalins use rotations and fertility management to help control weeds and insect pests. They are energy conscious and make an effort to reuse or recycle farm materials. The Kalins apply different strategies to stabilize cash flow in the face of fluctuating market prices. These include sale of excess crops, value added enterprises, and minimization of capital costs by reducing waste and making efficient use of assets.



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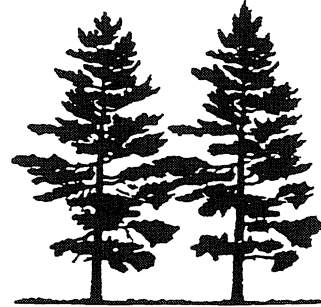
# DRAFT

## MAKING USDA PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOU

### Farmland Preservation and Greenhouse/Field Organic Food Production

#### Pheasant Hill Farm

George and Melanie DeVault  
3502 Main Road East Emmaus PA 18049  
Telephone 610-965-6871 email [devault@fast.net](mailto:devault@fast.net)  
web site [www.phfororganics.com](http://www.phfororganics.com)



George and Melanie DeVault purchased their farm in 1984 after driving past it many times on their way to work. Melanie was a review editor at Rodale Press and George is the editor of the *Russia Farm Magazine* also published by Rodale. We wanted to make this 20-acre farm our home they said. The landowner was trying to sell it for development but it had too many wet areas. The DeVaults have been direct marketers of organic high value crops ever since.

George was aware of USDA conservation programs as well as those in Pennsylvania and the county since he wrote articles on these subjects for the Rodale conservation and organic magazines. George was also very aware of the latest practices used to produce our food and the newest programs available to preserve farmland and natural resources. He says "We looked at the farmland easement as a way to expand and improve our organic food production without incurring a debt."

A farmland preservation easement allowed the DeVaults to accomplish two of their goals—first preserve the farmland and second allow Melanie to quit work at Rodale to be a full time mother and grow their organic direct sales business. The state of Pennsylvania requires the county to establish an agricultural security zone for a farm to be eligible for an easement. Once the farm was declared to be in an agricultural zone they were able to apply to the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Fund. The farm was accepted in 19\_\_\_\_. The state of Pennsylvania now owns the farm but George and Melanie are allowed to live and manage it as a farm for as long they or others chose to do so. They used Farmland Preservation funds to purchase equipment, put up a heated greenhouse and purchase a walk in cooler and a new tractor and loader. These actions made the farm more commercially viable and definitely more profitable. The DeVaults son has now joined them in producing organic high value crops that he sells to restaurants and other retail stores.

As part of their organic food production the DeVaults have adopted a number of conservation practices. These include crop rotations, cover crops, strip cropping, contour cropping and wildlife habitat management. They have managed their wet areas to make them both productive and environmentally sound. They hold an open house each year to show their customers and others how organic food is produced. They are also working with school age children and educating them on food production.

# DRAFT

## MAKING USDA PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOU

### HUNTING PRESERVE, CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

#### **Vern and Peg Knapp**

43778 Thompson Run Road Titusville PA 16354

814-827-1092 email [Knapping@csonline.net](mailto:Knapping@csonline.net)

Web page [PAFARMSTAY.COM](http://PAFARMSTAY.COM)



Vern and Peg Knapp farm 1000+ acres of hardwoods and pasture in Crawford County Pennsylvania. Their farm is an 1813 registered Pennsylvania Century Farm. They are the sixth generation living on and working the land. They started as dairy and grain farmers before switching to beef backgrounding (stocker) in 1991. Vern has been a Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board member for 30 years. This makes him very familiar with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation programs available to protect natural resources. In the early 1990s Vern and Peg knew they had to consider additional income-producing enterprises as a result of the changes in agriculture and the negative impact they were having on the profitability of the farm.

Since he was involved in the SWCD, Vern was very aware of the capabilities of the land in Crawford County. The area had been covered twice with glaciers and the soil was well adapted to some of the best hardwood production in the United States. On the other hand, the county is classed as 75 percent wetland which is not well suited to either crop or livestock production.

Vern and Pat developed several enterprises beginning with their first in 1995. They converted the upstairs of the 1870 farmhouse into four guest rooms with private baths for a B&B. They established the hunting preserve for deer and wild turkey and added pheasants, chukkers, Hungarian partridges, and quail. In 1996 they added trail rides and by 1998 started to add wetlands to improve the outdoor enjoyment and entertainment for hunters and B&B guests.

Vern and Pat rent the best land on their farm to neighbors for agricultural production. This fits their wildlife management program and expands the opportunity for fishing, wildlife, and nature trails. There are eight ponds/wetland areas on the farm of which three are fishable. They are adding three more ponds in 2001, two of which will be good for fishing. They are currently developing a guided fishing enterprise, nature trails, and birding enterprises on the farm.



# DRAFT

## MAKING USDA PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOU

METAL SCULPTURE, HUNTING PRESERVE,  
GREENHOUSE PLANTS

Jeff and Lisa Weber  
Bloomer Wisconsin



Jeff and Lisa Weber and their children live in \_\_\_\_\_ County Wisconsin. They purchased their 200-acre dairy/woodland farm in 1979 and rented another 100 acres for corn and small grain production. They were engaged in milking 35-45 cows and selling Grade A Milk when in 1996 a farm accident forced Jeff to undergo spinal surgery. Since Jeff could no longer milk cows, they replaced the dairy herd with 35 beef cows. Jeff also continued to pursue his hobby of welding art. Lisa started working off the farm to offset the loss of milk income and to provide health insurance benefits.

AgAbility of Wisconsin, a partnership with the University of Wisconsin Extension and Easter Seals, provided funding and assistance for the transition resulting from Jeff's disability. Jeff started with metal sculptures and then added a greenhouse to produce annual bedding plants. In 1999, he put up signs on the highways to sell the bedding plants and people were waiting in line to purchase them. Last year they added a second greenhouse designed to be handicapped accessible to grow and market garden and ornamental vegetables, perennials, herbs, and some vines. They market unusual plants such as oriental peppers, ornamental tomatoes, and Japanese painted ferns. Customers are local people who are generally older. Jeff and Lisa are in competition with a multi-greenhouse producer who is 20 miles down the road but have been able to grow every year because they sell for less and provide very personal service.

On their farm, Jeff and Lisa have developed three ponds with about six to seven acres of open water, restored one wetland area, and are turning 40 acres into a wetland. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWLS) provided technical assistance to develop the ponds. The first one was funded by the Farm Services Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). FWLS assisted financially in developing the other two ponds and in the wetland restoration. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has also been involved. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is providing the leadership, technical assistance, and part of the funding for developing the 40-acre wetland under the Wetland Reserve Program. Jeff and Lisa have also worked with Pheasants Forever to develop food plots.

Plans are to grow slowly. The route Jeff and Lisa have taken in the past is to try new ideas and discard those that don't work. The wetlands are to be used for fee hunting with special accommodations to make them accessible to hunters with disabilities. Jeff and Lisa want to improve the upland game population through better habitat management. They are investigating new programs like USDA's Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, state programs, and the conservation buffer program that will help them establish more versatile wildlife habitat. Greenhouse production will be expanded to include more perennials and other plants. Finding auto parts for his metal crafts continues to be a problem for Jeff.



# MAKING USDA PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOU

'AGRITAINMENT''

DRAFT



RIDING TRAILS, FARM STAYS  
AND FEE FISHING  
(Hypothetical Farm)

This 360-acre beef cow-calf farm is located east of the Mississippi River. The landowner is the manager but lives elsewhere. The farm has several natural attributes conducive to agritourism such as streams, hills, pond areas, and woodlands. The landowner plans to retire on the farm in a few years and run his "agritainment enterprises." In preparation for retirement, he has the following goals: expand the cattle operations enterprise, develop a horseback riding enterprise, develop a farm stay enterprise, and develop a fee fishing enterprise.

USDA programs are available to provide the landowner technical and financial assistance in accomplishing his objectives. Long range planning is essential as program funding is not available to implement all of the enterprises in one year.

## Expanding the Livestock Enterprise

EQIP can be used to purchase and install fencing to enlarge the grazing area for the cattle operation. The landowner cost shares in the plan and clears additional land for improved grazing conditions.

## Horseback Riding Enterprise

EQIP can be used

- a to cost-share in establishing livestock stream crossings which may also be used for the horseback riding trails
- b to cost share in improving areas that will be used for trails and to fence cattle out of wetland areas and streams
- c to cost-share in reducing stream bank erosion by landscaping which will enhance the wildlife habitat as well as the horseback rider's environment

FSA Emergency Funds can be used to cost-share in establishing wells to provide water for livestock during drought conditions and later for horseback riders and horses.

## On Farm Stays Enterprise

Can be developed using several USDA programs

- a FSA Emergency Funds used to develop wells for the livestock may also provide a water source for on farm stay structures and other on farm alternative enterprises and agritainment activities
- b Buffer Initiative (Continuous CRP) can be used to enhance the stream area through plantings which will enhance walking trails, birding, and other types of relaxation

## Fishing Enterprise

Wetlands Reserve Program can be used to establish wetlands that support wildlife and fishing.

FSA \_\_\_\_\_ program funds can be used to cost-share in establishing multipurpose ponds to supply water to livestock and support a fee fishing enterprise.

*Montana*

**Q Where can I find the Sieben Livestock Ranch? A On the north slope of the Big Belt Mountains in north central Montana**

The Sieben Ranch may not be easy to find but it's worth the hunt Chase Hibbard is the fourth generation stewarding this ranch begun in 1906 He manages 1 900 head of cattle and 1 000 sheep using a rotational grazing system so that plants including native perennials can thrive and bare eroded areas are prevented

In this terrain, managing forests - for forest health and wildfire prevention - is also a key part of the ranch operations

The natural diversity and healthy ranch landscape creates a home for many species in addition to the cattle and sheep Elk, mule deer white tailed deer antelope coyotes bears foxes badgers mountain lions and numerous small mammals share the ranch with the livestock

The Hibbards permit limited guided big game hunts on the ranch and also allow significant public hunting

*NRCS Quote* Henry Sieben, the original ranch owner in 1868 who had great respect and love of this land would be extremely pleased and proud of the stewardship and land ethic that continues to this day due to the efforts of Chase Hibbard - Jon Siddoway Rangeland Conservationist

*Conservation At-A-Glance* 1) Prescribed grazing (rest rotation) 2) timber management and fuel reduction 3) spring development and watering systems 4) environmental demonstration projects 5) fencing 6) pest management (weeds) and 7) critical area treatment (seeding)

*NRCS Program Participation* NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance Great Plains Conservation Program

*Pennsylvania*

## **Think the Family Farm in America is a Remnant of Childhood Nostalgia?**

Think again In Saxonburg Pennsylvania, the 1 000-acre Armstrong Farm has been in the same family for six generations - since 1816 Some of your other childhood visions of a family farm would match, too They have 400 mother cows and calves feeding on rotated pastures of verdant healthy grass

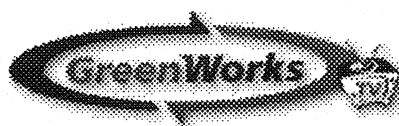
The farm retains woodlots between the cattle paddocks and last year added 350 tree seedlings Kathy Allen says that this has had unexpected and satisfying results Wildlife on the farm is abundant including deer wild turkeys grouse pheasants and songbirds Recently the farm served to help reintroduce the native barn owl A wetland area (you might have thought of it as marsh in your younger days) is fenced off to support waterfowl nesting and migration

If you want to compare your impressions to the actual farm that's very possible Owners John and Kathy Allen host wildflower walks conservation walks fishing and archery activities and run a successful bed and breakfast on the farm You can view all these operations from horseback or on foot on their seven miles of trails

*NRCS Quote* The Allens have really recognized the value of the resources on their farm and have worked hard to improve and protect them They also recognize that conservation does pay We are pleased to be able to help them carry on the tradition of agriculture on their land - Robin Heard NRCS State Conservationist

*Conservation At-A-Glance* 1) Prescribed grazing (rotational) 2) forage management 3) fencing 4) watering facility (solar-powered) 5) grass buffer (manure filter) 6) field demonstrations 7) wetland wildlife habitat management 8) tree planting 9) pond and spring developments and 10) barn owl releases

*USDA Program Participation* Project Grass Emergency Conservation Program, Agricultural Management Assistance NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance



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## THIS WEEK'S FEATURE



**Urban Gardens** — All over the country, communities have discovered the rewards of urban gardens. Meet people who are working in their very own gardens, right in the heart of the city!



**Less is More** — Between product packaging, electricity usage and hoards of unused clothing, we all have "extras" we'd do better without. See how our lives are fuller without the clutter.

## GREENWORKS EXCLUSIVE

## Cartridge and Cell Phone Recycling Program

**Cartridge and Cell Phone Recycling Campaign** — While you're reducing your clutter, why not donate that old cell phone or printer cartridge, and help GreenWorks!

## GREENWORKS TELEVISION



Join the Emmy® Award winning **GreenWorks Television** for an adventure that takes viewers on a journey to meet the people in your backyard working to protect our environmental health.

**This month's show: Think Globally, Eat Locally**

**Calling all Producers!** GreenTreks Network, Inc and KRCB-TV are putting together a new series, **Natural Heroes**, for national distribution and we want your films...

## Feature



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## GREENWORKS PROGRAMS

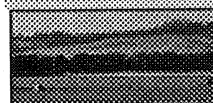


Each month, blending pictures and sounds, Rough Terrain provides a view into the life of the people who are making a difference for our environment.

**This month — Found Objects**



The ultimate network for watershed restoration efforts in Pennsylvania and all over the nation! This week in **Watersheds.tv...**



We constantly develop special sites focused on a particular issue or in partnership with environmental groups. Visit **Landsavers**



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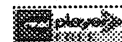


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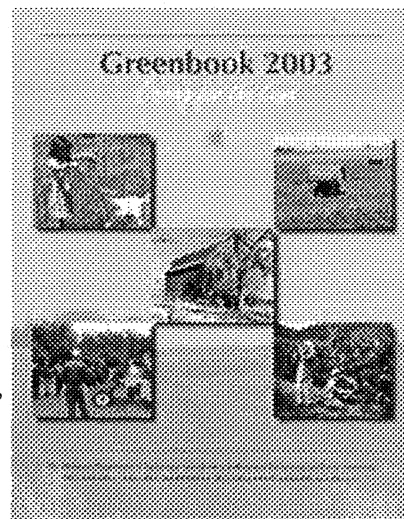


Farm Planning & Practices > Research & Development > Energy & Sustainable Agriculture > Greenbook

## Greenbook 2003: Caring for the Land

I am pleased to introduce the 14th edition of the *Greenbook*. The *Greenbook* is an annual publication of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Resources Management and Development Division (ARMD). The *Greenbook* highlights the results of creative and innovative farmers and researchers involved with the Sustainable Agriculture On-Farm Demonstration Grant Program. These people are dedicated to doing their part to ensure that Minnesota agriculture is profitable and environmentally friendly.

Sustainable agriculture continues to evolve and expand. In the early days of our Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program, the focus was mainly on farming practices that reduced inputs and enhanced the environment. As time went on, the program evolved to include diversification of crops and alternative livestock systems. Today, sustainable agriculture includes all these things and it gives farmers increased access to alternative markets such as organic, sustainable, eco-labels, and locally produced. Farmers are incorporating marketing into their businesses as a way to capture more of the food dollar to keep their farms viable.



*Greenbook 2003* contains articles that highlight the results of the grantees' projects and provide practical and technical information. Each article includes personal observations and management tips from the participants. Additionally, these grantees are willing to share their knowledge and experiences with you. Feel free to give them a call about their projects.

Our essayists this year include Bill Hunt, State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Minnesota, and Art Thicke, who operates a grass-based dairy farm in La Crescent, Minnesota.

Bill's essay addresses the relationship of the NRCS with farmers and the role it plays in assisting farmers to care for and maintain Minnesota's natural resources. Incidentally, the MDA recently signed an agreement with NRCS and other federal and state organizations to cooperate more closely in serving the state's organic agriculture sector. Art's essay describes how and why he addresses natural resource issues on his farm and his observations on the impacts of his actions. I think you will find both informative and interesting.

The *Greenbook* also includes updates on other ARMD projects such as monitoring at Big Woods Dairy at Nerstrand — Big Woods State Park, organic growth in Minnesota, integrated pest management, Minnesota grown opportunities, research on soil quality and the rainfall simulator.

I hope you find *Greenbook 2003* interesting and full of new and useful ideas.

Gene Hugoson, Commissioner

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### Essays

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service — Protecting Minnesota's Natural Resources and Providing Conservation Technical Assistance to Minnesota's Agricultural Producers and Landowners (PDF: [152 KB / 2 pages](#))
- Managed Grazing, A Mossy Hollow, and Binoculars Behind the Barn — An Interview with Art Thicke, Winter 2003 (PDF: [128 KB / 3 pages](#))

## **Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program**

- Grant Program Description (PDF: [128 KB / 1 page](#))

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- Pride of the Prairie: Charting the Course from Sustainable Farms to Local Dinner Plates (PDF: [260 KB / 2 pages](#))
- Creating Public Recognition of and Demand for "Grass-fed" Dairy Products Through the Development of Brand Standards and Promotion of These Standards to the Public (PDF: [273 KB / 4 pages](#))
- Creating Consumer Demand for Sustainable Squash with Labels and Education (PDF: [330 KB / 3 pages](#))
- Demonstrating the Market Potential for Sustainable Pork (PDF: [202 KB / 3 pages](#))
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- Organic Strawberry Production in Minnesota (PDF: [276 KB / 2 pages](#))
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- Research and Demonstration Garden for New Immigrant Farmers at the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education Park (UMore Park) (PDF: [323 KB / 3 pages](#))

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- Dairy Manure Application Methods and Nutrient Loss from Alfalfa (PDF: [369 KB / 4 pages](#))
- Soil Conservation of Canning Crop Fields (PDF: [293 KB / 4 pages](#))
- In-field Winter Drying and Storage of Corn: An Economic Analysis of Costs and Returns (PDF: [292 KB / 4 pages](#))
- Chickling Vetch — A New Green Manure Crop and Organic Control of Canada Thistle in Northwest Minnesota (PDF: [358 KB / 3 pages](#))
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- Woolly Cupgrass Research ([PDF: 301 KB / 3 pages](#))
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## Livestock

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Integrated Pest Management Program ([PDF: 235 KB / 4 pages](#))

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